

UNIVERSITY OF
ILLINOIS LIBRARY
AT URBANA CHAMPAIGN
BOOKSTACKS

NOTICE: Return or renew all Library Materials! The *Minimum Fee* for each Lost Book is \$50.00.

The person charging this material is responsible for its return to the library from which it was withdrawn on or before the **Latest Date** stamped below.

Theft, mutilation, and underlining of books are reasons for disciplinary action and may result in dismissal from the University.

To renew call Telephone Center, 333-8400

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS LIBRARY AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

DUE:

4/9/94

APR 20 1994

OCT 05 1994

MAY 16 1996

MAY 11 1996

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2010 with funding from
University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

<http://www.archive.org/details/lodore03shel>

L O D O R E.

BY THE

AUTHOR OF "FRANKENSTEIN."

In the turmoils of our lives,
Men are like politic states, or troubled seas,
Tossed up and down with several storms and tempests,
Change and variety of wrecks and fortunes;
Till, labouring to the havens of our homes,
We struggle for the calm that crowns our ends.

FORD.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

L O N D O N :

RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

(SUCCESSOR TO HENRY COLBURN.)

1835.

LONDON :

IBOTSON AND PALMER, PRINTERS, SAVOY STREET, STRAND.

823
Sh 4 lo
V. 3

L O D O R E.

CHAPTER I.

If the dull substance of my flesh were thought,
Injurious distance should not stop my way ;
For then, despite of space, I would be brought,
From limits far remote, where thou dost stay.

SHAKSPEARE.

THE still hours of darkness passed silently
away, and morning dawned, when

All rose to do the task, he set to each
Who shaped us to his ends, and not our own.

Ethel had slept peacefully through the livelong
night ; nor woke till a knock at her door roused
her. A rush of fear—a sense of ill, made her

heart palpitate as she opened her eyes to the light of day. While she was striving to recall her thoughts, and to remember what the evil was with which she was threatened, again the servant tapped at her door, to say that Saunders had returned, and to deliver the letter he had brought. She looked at her watch : it was past ten o'clock. She felt glad that it had grown so late, and she not disturbed : yet as she took the letter brought to her from her husband, all her tremor returned ; and she read it with agitation, as if it contained the announcement of her final doom.

“ You send me disagreeable tidings, my sweet Ethel,” wrote Villiers,—“ I hope unfounded ; but caution is necessary : I shall not, therefore, come to Duke Street. Send me a few lines, by Saunders, to tell me if any thing has happened. If what he apprehended has really taken place, you must bear, my love, the separation of a day. You do not understand these things, and will

wonder when I tell you, that when the clock strikes twelve on Saturday night, the magic spells and potent charms of Saunders's friends cease to have power: at that hour I shall be restored to you. Wait till then—and *then* we will consult for the future. Have patience, dearest love: you have wedded poverty, hardship, and annoyance; but, joined to these, is the fondest, the most faithful heart in the world;—a heart you deign to prize, so I will not repine at ill fortune. Adieu, till this evening;—and then, as Belvidera says, ‘Remember twelve!’

“*Saturday Morning.*”

After reading these lines, Ethel dressed herself hastily. Fanny Derham had already asked permission to see her; and she found her waiting in her sitting-room. It was an unspeakable comfort to have one as intelligent and kind as Fanny, to communicate with, during Edward's absence. The soft, pleading eyes of Ethel asked her for comfort and counsel; and, in

spite of her extreme youth, the benignant and intelligent expression of Fanny's countenance promised both.

"I am sorry to say," she said, "that Saunders's prognostics are too true. Such men as he describes have been here this morning. They were tolerably civil, and I convinced them, with greater ease than I had hoped, that Mr. Villiers was absent from the house; and I assured them, that after this visit of theirs, he was not likely to return."

"And do you really believe that they were?" —Ethel faltered.

"Bailiffs? Assuredly," replied Fanny: "they told me that they had the power to search the house; but if they were 'strong,' they were also 'merciful.' And now, what do you do? Saunders tells me he is waiting to take back a letter to Mr. Villiers, at the London Coffee House. Write quickly, while I make your breakfast."

Ethel gladly obeyed. She wrote a few words

to her husband. That it was already Saturday, cheered her: twelve at night would soon come.

After her note was dispatched, she addressed Fanny. "What trouble I give," she said: "what will your mother think of such degrading proceedings?"

"My mother," said Fanny, "is the kindest-hearted woman in the world. We have never exactly suffered this disaster; but we are in a rank of life which causes us to be brought into contact with such among our friends and relations; and she is familiar with trouble in almost all shapes. You are a great favourite of hers; and now that she can claim a sort of acquaintance, she will be heart and soul your friend."

"It is odd," observed Ethel, "that she never mentioned you to me. Had the name of Fanny been mentioned, I should have recollected who Mrs. Derham was."

"Perhaps not," said Fanny; "it would have required a great effort of the imagination to have fancied Mrs. Derham the wife of my father.

You never knew him ; but Lord Lodore made you familiar with his qualities: the most shrinking susceptibility to the world's scorn, joined to the most entire abstraction from all that is vulgar ; a morbid sensibility and delicate health placed him in glaring contrast with my mother. They never in the least assimilated ; and her character has gained in excellence since his loss. Before she was fretted and galled by his finer feelings—now she can be good in her own way. Nothing reminds her of his exalted sentiments, except myself ; and she is willing enough to forget me.”

“ And you do not repine ? ” asked her friend.

“ I do not : she is happy in and with Sarah. I should spoil their notions of comfort, did I mingle with them ;—they would torture and destroy me, did they interfere with me. I lost my guide, preserver, my guardian angel, when my father died. Nothing remains but the philosophy which he taught me—the disdain of low-thoughted care which he sedulously cultivated :

this, joined to my cherished independence, which my disposition renders necessary to me."

"And thus you foster sorrow, and waste your life in vain regrets?"

"Pardon me! I do not waste my life," replied Fanny, with her sunny smile;—"nor am I unhappy—far otherwise. An ardent thirst for knowledge, is as the air I breathe; and the acquisition of it, is pure and unalloyed happiness. I aspire to be useful to my fellow-creatures: but that is a consideration for the future, when fortune shall smile on me; now I have but one passion; it swallows up every other; it dwells with my darling books, and is fed by the treasures of beauty and wisdom which they contain."

Ethel could not understand. Fanny continued:—"I aspire to be useful;—sometimes I think I am—once I know I was. I was my father's almoner.

"We lived in a district where there was a great deal of distress, and a great deal of oppression. We had no money to give, but I soon found

that determination and earnestness will do much. It was my father's lesson, that I should never fear any thing but myself. He taught me to penetrate, to anatomize, to purify my motives ; but once assured of my own integrity, to be afraid of nothing. Words have more power than any one can guess ; it is by words that the world's great fight, now in these civilized times, is carried on ; I never hesitated to use them, when I fought any battle for the miserable and oppressed. People are so afraid to speak, it would seem as if half our fellow-creatures were born with deficient organs ; like parrots they can repeat a lesson, but their voice fails them, when that alone is wanting to make the tyrant quail."

As Fanny spoke, her blue eyes brightened, and a smile irradiated her face ; these were all the tokens of enthusiasm she displayed, yet her words moved Ethel strangely, and she looked on her with wonder as a superior being. Her youth gave grace to her sentiments,

and were an assurance of their sincerity. She continued :—

“ I am becoming flighty, as my mother calls it ; but, as I spoke, many scenes of cottage distress passed through my memory, when, holding my father’s hand, I witnessed his endeavours to relieve the poor. That is all over now—he is gone, and I have but one consolation—that of endeavouring to render myself worthy to rejoin him in a better world. It is this hope that impels me continually and without any flagging of spirit, to cultivate my understanding and to refine it. O what has this life to give, as worldlings describe it, worth one of those glorious emotions, which raise me from this petty sphere, into the sun-bright regions of mind, which my father inhabits ! I am rewarded even here by the elevated feelings which the authors, whom I love so passionately, inspire ; while I converse each day with Plato, and Cicero, and Epictetus, the world, as it is, passes from before me like a vain shadow.”

These enthusiastic words were spoken with so calm a manner, and in so equable a voice, that there seemed nothing strange nor exaggerated in them. It is vanity and affectation that shock, or any manifestation of feeling not in accordance with the real character. But while we follow our natural bent, and only speak that which our minds spontaneously inspire, there is a harmony, which, however novel, is never grating. Fanny Derham spoke of things, which, to use her own expression, were to her as the air she breathed, and the simplicity of her manner entirely obviated the wonder which the energy of her expressions might occasion.

Such a woman as Fanny was more made to be loved by her own sex than by the opposite one. Superiority of intellect, joined to acquisitions beyond those usual even to men ; and both announced with frankness, though without pretension, forms a kind of anomaly little in accord with masculine taste. Fanny could not be the rival of women, and, therefore, all her merits

were appreciated by them. They love to look up to a superior being, to rest on a firmer support than their own minds can afford ; and they are glad to find such in one of their own sex, and thus destitute of those dangers which usually attend any services conferred by men.

From talk like this, they diverged to subjects nearer to the heart of Ethel. They spoke of Lord Lodore, and her father's name soothed her agitation even more than the consolatory arguments of her friend. She remembered how often he had talked of the trials to which the constancy of her temper and the truth of her affection might be put, and she felt her courage rise to encounter those now before her, without discontent, or rather with that cheerful fortitude, which sheds grace over the rugged form of adversity.

CHAPTER II.

Marian. Could you so long be absent?

Robin. What a week?

Was that so long?

Marian. How long are lovers' weeks,
Do you think, Robin, when they are asunder?
Are they not pris'ners' years?

BEN. JONSON.

THE day passed on more lightly than Ethel could have hoped ; much of it indeed was gone before she opened her eyes to greet it. Night soon closed in, and she busied herself with arrangements for the welcome of her husband. Fanny loved solitude too well herself not to believe that others shared her taste. She retired therefore when evening commenced. No sooner

was Ethel alone, than every image except Edward's passed out of her mind. Her heart was bursting with affection. Every other idea and thought, to use a chemical expression, was held in solution by that powerful feeling, which mingled and united with every particle of her soul. She could not write nor read; if she attempted, before she had finished the shortest sentence, she found that her understanding was wandering, and she re-read it with no better success. It was as if a spring, a gush from the fountain of love poured itself in, bearing away every object which she strove to throw upon the stream of thought, till its own sweet waters alone filled the channel through which it flowed. She gave herself up to the bewildering influence, and almost forgot to count the hours till Edward's expected arrival. At last it was ten o'clock, and then the sting of impatience and uncertainty was felt. It appeared to her as if a whole age had passed since she had seen or heard of him—as if countless events and incalculable changes might have taken place. She

read again and again his note, to assure herself that she might really expect him : the minutes meanwhile stood still, or were told heavily by the distinct beating of her heart. The east wind bore to her ear the sound of the quarters of hours, as they chimed from various churches. At length eleven, half-past eleven was passed, and the hand of her watch began to climb slowly upwards toward the zenith, which she desired so ardently that it should reach. She gazed on the dial-plate, till she fancied that the pointers did not move ; she placed her hands before her eyes resolutely, and would not look for a long long time ; three minutes had not been travelled over when again she viewed it ; she tried to count her pulse, as a measurement of time ; her trembling fingers refused to press the fluttering artery. At length another quarter of an hour elapsed, and then the succeeding one hurried on more speedily. Clock after clock struck ; they mingled their various tones, as the hour of twelve was tolled throughout London. It seemed as if they would never

end. Silence came at last—a brief silence succeeded by a firm quick step in the street below, and a knock at the door. “Is he not too soon?” poor fearful Ethel asked herself. But no; and in a moment after, he was with her, safe in her glad embrace.

Perhaps of the two, Villiers showed himself the most enraptured at this meeting. He gazed on his sweet wife, followed every motion, and hung upon her voice, with all the delight of an exile, restored to his long-lost home. “What a transporting change,” he said, “to find myself with you—to see you in the same room with me—to know again that, lovely and dear as you are, that you are mine—that I am again myself—not the miserable dog that has been wandering about all day—a body without a soul! For a few short hours, at least, Ethel will call me hers.”

“Indeed, indeed, love,” she replied, “we will not be separated again.”

“We will not even think about that to-

night," said Villiers. "The future is dark and blank, the present as radiant as your own sweet self can make it."

On the following day—and the following day did come, in spite of Ethel's wishes, which would have held back the progress of time: it came and passed away; hour after hour stealing along, till it dwindled to a mere point. On the following day, they consulted earnestly on what was to be done. Villiers was greatly averse to Ethel's leaving her present abode, where every one was so very kind and attentive to her, and he was sanguine in his hopes of obtaining in the course of the week, just commenced, a sum, sufficient to carry them to Paris or Brussels, were they could remain till his affairs were finally arranged, and the payment of his debts regulated in a way to satisfy his creditors. One week of absence; Villiers used all his persuasion to induce Ethel to submit to it. "Where you can be, I can be also," was her answer; and she listened unconvinced to the detail of the in-

conveniences which Villiers pointed out : at last he almost got angry. “ I could call you unkind, Ethel,” he said, “ not to yield to me.”

“ I will yield to you,” said Ethel, “ but you are wrong to ask me.”

“ Never mind that,” replied her husband, “ do concede this point, dearest ; if not because it is best that you should, then because I wish it, and ask it of you. You say that your first desire is to make me happy, and you pain me exceedingly by your—I had almost said perverseness.”

Thus, not convinced, but obedient, Ethel agreed to allow him to depart alone. She bargained that she should be permitted to come each day in a hackney coach to a place where he might meet her, and they could spend an hour or two together. Edward did not like this plan at all, but there was no remedy. “ You are at least resolved,” he said, “ to spur my endeavours ; I will not rest day or night, till I am enabled to get away from this vast dungeon.”

The hours stole on. Even Edward's buoyant spirits could not bear up against the sadness of watching the fleeting moments till the one should come, which must separate him from his wife. "This nice, dear room," he said, "I am sure I beg its pardon for having despised it so much formerly—it is not as lofty as a church, nor as grand as a palace, but it is very snug; and now you are in it, I discern even elegance in its exceedingly queer tables and chairs. When our carriage broke down on the Apennines, how glad we should have been if a room like this had risen, 'like an exhalation' for our shelter! Do you remember the barn of a place we got into there, and our droll bed of the leaves of Indian corn, which crackled all night long, and awoke us twenty times with the fear of robbers? Then, indeed, twelve o'clock was not to separate us!"

As he said this he sighed; the hour of eleven was indicated by Ethel's watch, and still he lingered; but she grew frightened for him, and

forced him to go away, while he besought the delay of but a few minutes.

Ethel exerted herself to endure as well as she could the separation of the ensuing week. She was not of a repining disposition, yet she found it very hard to bear. The discomfort to which Villiers was exposed annoyed her, and the idea that she was not permitted to alleviate it added to her painful feelings. In her prospect of life every evil was neutralized when shared—now they were doubled, because the pain of absence from each other was superadded. She did not yield to her husband, in her opinion that this was wrong. She was willing to go anywhere with him, and where he was, she also could be. There could be no degradation in a wife waiting on the fallen fortunes of her husband. No debasement can arise from any services dictated by love. It is despicable to submit to hardship for unworthy and worldly objects, but every thing that is suffered for the sake of affection, is hallowed by the disinterested sentiment, and

affords triumph and delight to the willing victim. Sometimes she tried in speech or on paper to express these feelings, and so by the force of irresistible reasoning to persuade Edward to permit her to join him; but all argument was weak; there was something beyond, that no words could express, which was stronger than any reason in her heart. Who can express the power of faithful and single-hearted love? As well attempt to define the laws of life, which occasions a continuity of feeling from the brain to the extremity of the frame, as try to explain how love can so unite two souls, as to make each feel maimed and half alive, while divided. A powerful impulse was perpetually urging Ethel to go—to place herself near Villiers—to refuse to depart. It was with the most violent struggles that she overcame the instigation.

She never could forget herself while away from him, or find the slightest alleviation to her disquietude, except while conversing with Fanny Derham, or rather while drawing her out, and listening to her, and wondering at a mechanism

of mind so different from her own. Each had been the favourite daughter of men of superior qualities of mind. They had been educated by their several fathers with the most sedulous care, and nothing could be more opposite than the result, except that, indeed, both made duty the master motive of their actions. Ethel had received, so to speak, a sexual education. Lord Lodore had formed his ideal of what a woman ought to be, of what he had wished to find his wife, and sought to mould his daughter accordingly. Mr. Derham contemplated the duties and objects befitting an immortal soul, and had educated his child for the performance of them. The one fashioned his offspring to be the wife of a frail human being, and instructed her to be yielding, and to make it her duty to devote herself to his happiness, and to obey his will. The other sought to guard his from all weakness, to make her complete in herself, and to render her independent and self-sufficing. Born to poverty as Fanny was, it was thus only that she could find happiness in rising above her

sphere ; and, besides, a sense of pride, surviving his sense of injury, caused him to wish that his child should set her heart on higher things, than the distinctions and advantages of riches or rank ; so that if ever brought into collision with his own family, she could look down with calm superiority on the “ low ambition ” of the wealthy. While Ethel made it her happiness and duty to give herself away with unreserved prodigality to him, whom she thought had every claim to her entire devotion ; Fanny zealously guarded her individuality, and would have scorned herself could she have been brought to place the treasures of her soul at the disposal of any power, except those moral laws which it was her earnest endeavour never to transgress. Religion, reason, and justice—these were the landmarks of her life. She was kind-hearted, generous, and true—so also was Ethel ; but the one was guided by the tenderness of her heart, while the other consulted her understanding, and would have died rather than have acted contrary to its dictates.

To guard Ethel from every contamination, Lord Lodore had secluded her from all society, and forestalled every circumstance that might bring her into conjunction with her fellow-creatures. He was equally careful to prevent her fostering any pride, except that of sex ; and never spoke to her as if she were of an elevated rank : and the communication, however small, which she necessarily had with the Americans, made such ideas foreign to her mind. But she was exceedingly shy ; tremblingly alive to the slightest repulse ; and never perfectly fearless, (morally so, that is,) except when under the shelter of another's care. Fanny's first principle was, that what she ought to do, that she could do, without hesitation or regard for obstacles. She had something Quixotic in her nature ; or rather she would have had, if a clear head and some experience, even young as she was, had not stood in the way of her making any glaring mistakes ; so that her enterprises were never ridiculous ; and being usually successful, could not be called extravagant. For herself, she

needed but her liberty and her books ;—for others, she had her time, her thoughts, her decided and resolute modes of action, all at their command, whenever she was convinced that they had a just claim upon them.

It was singular that the resolute and unshrinking Fanny should be the daughter of Francis Derham ; and the timid, retiring Ethel, of his bold and daring protector. But this is no uncommon case. We feel the evil results of our own faults, and endeavour to guard our children from them ; forgetful that the opposite extreme has also its peculiar dangers. Lord Lodore attributed his early misfortunes to the too great freedom he had enjoyed, or rather to the unlimited scope given to his will, from his birth. Mr. Derham saw the unhappiness that had sprung from his own yielding and undecided disposition. The one brought up his child to dependence ; the other taught his to disdain every support, except the applause of her own conscience. Lodore fostered all the sensibility, all the softness, of Ethel's feminine and delicat

nature; while Fanny's father strove to harden and confirm a character, in itself singularly steadfast and upright.

In spite of the great contrast thus exhibited between Ethel and Fanny, one quality created a good deal of similarity between them. There was in both a total absence of every factitious sentiment. They acted from their own hearts—from their own sense of right, without the intervention of worldly considerations. A feeling of duty ruled all their actions; and, however excellent a person's dispositions may be, it yet requires considerable elevation of character never to deviate from the strict line of honour and integrity.

Fanny's society a little relieved Ethel's solitude: yet that did not weigh on her; and had she not been the child of her father's earliest friend, and the companion of past days, she would have been disinclined, at this period, to cultivate an intimacy with her. She needed no companion except the thought of Edward, which

was never absent from her mind. But amidst all her affection for her husband, which gained strength, and, as it were, covered each day a larger portion of her being, any one associated with the name of Lodore—of her beloved father, had a magic power to call forth her warmest feelings of interest. Both ladies repeated to each other what they had heard from their several parents. Mr. Derham had, among his many lessons of usefulness, descanted on the generosity and boldness of Fitzhenry, as offering an example to be followed. And during the last months of Lodore's life, he had recurred, with passionate fondness, to the memory of his early years, and painted in glowing colours the delicacy of feeling, the deep sense of gratitude, and the latent but fervid enthusiasm, which adorned the character of Francis Derham.

CHAPTER III.

It does much trouble me to live without you :
Our loves and loving souls have been so used
To one household in us.

BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

THE week passed on. It was the month of January, and very cold. A black frost bound up every thing with ice, and the piercing air congealed the very blood. Each day Ethel went to see her husband ;—each day she had to encounter Mrs. Derham's intreaties not to go, and the reproaches of Villiers for coming. Both were unavailing to prevent the daily pilgrimage. Mrs. Derham sighed heavily when she saw her

enter the rickety hackney-coach, whose damp lining, gaping windows, and miserable straw, made it a *cold-bed* for catarrh—a very temple for the spirit of winter. Villiers each day besought her to have horses put to their chariot, if she must come; but Ethel remembered all he had ever said of expense, and his prognostications of how ill she would be able to endure the petty, yet galling annoyances of poverty; and she resolved to prove, that she could cheerfully bear every thing except separation from him. With this laudable motive to incite her, she tasked her strength too far. She kept up her spirits to meet him with a cheerful countenance; and she contrived to conceal the sufferings she endured while they were together. They got out and walked now and then; and this tended to keep up the vital warmth. Their course was generally taken over Blackfriars Bridge; and it was on their return across the river, on whose surface large masses of ice floated, while a bitter north-east wind swept up, bear-

ing on its blasts the unthawed breath of the German Ocean, that she felt the cold enter her heart, and make her head feel dizzy. Still she could smile, and ask Villiers why he objected to her taking an exercise even necessary for her health; and repeat again and again, that, bred in America, an English winter was but a faint reflex of what she had encountered there, and insist upon being permitted to come on the following day. These were precious moments in her eyes, worth all the pain they occasioned,—well worth the struggle she made for the repetition. Edward's endearing attentions—the knowledge she had that she was loved—the swelling and earnest affection that warmed her own heart,—hallowed these hard-earned minutes, and gave her the sweet pleasure of knowing that she demonstrated, in some slight degree, the profound and all-engrossing attachment which pervaded her entire being. They parted; and often she arrived nearly senseless at Duke Street, and once or twice fainted on entering the

warm room: but it was not pain she felt then—the emotions of the soul conquered the sensation of her body, and pleasure, the intense pleasure of affection, was predominant through all.

Sunday came again, and brought Villiers to her home. Mrs. Derham took the opportunity to represent to him the injury that Ethel was doing herself; and begged him, as he cared for her health, to forbid her exposing herself to the inclement weather.

“You hear this, Ethel,” said Villiers; “and yet you are obstinate. Is this right? What can I urge, what can I do, to prevent this wrong-headed pertinacity?”

“You use such very hard words,” replied Ethel, smiling, “that you frighten me into believing myself criminal. But so far am I from conceding, that you only give me courage to say, that I cannot any longer endure the sad and separate life we lead. It must be changed, dearest; we must be together.”

Villiers was pacing the room impatiently:

with an exclamation almost approaching to anger, he stopped before his wife, to remonstrate and to reproach. But as he gazed upon her upturned face, fixed so beseechingly and fondly on him, he fancied that he saw the hues of ill-health stealing across her cheeks, and thinness displacing the roundness of her form. A strange emotion flashed across him; a new fear, too terrible even to be acknowledged to himself, which passed, like the shadow of a storm, across his anticipations, and filled him with inquietude. His reprehension was changed to a caress, as he said, "You are right, my love, quite right; we must not live thus. You are unable to take care of yourself; and I am very wrong to give up my dearest privilege, of watching day and night over the welfare of my only treasure. We will be together, Ethel; if the worst come, it cannot be very bad, while we are true to each other."

Tears filled the poor girl's eyes—tears of joy and tenderness—at hearing Edward echo the

sentiments she cherished as the most sacred in the world. For a few minutes, they forgot every thing in the affectionate kiss, which ratified, as it were, this new law ; and then Edward considered how best he could carry it into effect.

“Gayland,” he said, (he was his solicitor,) “has appointed to see me on Thursday morning, and has good hopes of definitively arranging the conditions for the loan of the five hundred pounds, which is to enable us to wait for better things. On Thursday evening, we will leave town. We will go to some pretty country inn, to wait till I have signed these papers ; and trust to Providence that no ill will arise. We must not be more than fifteen or twenty miles from London ; so that when I am obliged to go up, I can return again in a few hours. Tell me, sweet, does this scheme please you ?”

Ethel expressed her warmest gratitude ; and then Villiers insinuated his condition, that she should not come to see him in the interval, but

remain, taking care of herself, till, on Thursday afternoon, at six o'clock, she came, with their chariot, to the northern side of St. Paul's Churchyard, where he would immediately join her. They might write, meanwhile: he promised letters as long as if they were to go to India; and soothed her annoyance with every expression of thankfulness at her giving up this point. She did give it up, with all the readiness she could muster; and this increased, as he dwelt upon the enjoyment they would share, in exchanging foggy, smoky London, for the ever-pleasing aspect of nature, which, even during frost and snow, possesses her own charms—her own wonders; and can gratify our senses by a thousand forms of beauty, which have no existence in a dingy metropolis.

When the evening hour came for the young pair to separate, their hearts were cheered by the near prospect of re-union; and a belief that the, to them, trivial privations of poverty were the only ones they would have to endure. The

thrill of fear which had crossed the mind of Villiers, as to the health and preservation of his wife, had served to dissipate the lingering sense of shame and degradation inspired by the penury of their situation. He felt that there was something better than wealth, and the attendance of his fellow-creatures; something worse than poverty, and the world's scorn. Within the fragile form of Ethel, there beat a heart of more worth than a king's ransom; and its pulsations were ruled by him. To lose her! What would all that earth can afford, of power or splendour, appear without her? He pressed her to his bosom, and knew that his arms encircled all life's worth for him. Never again could he forget the deep-felt appreciation of her value, which then took root in his mind; while she, become conscious, by force of sympathy, of the kind of revolution that was made in his sentiments, felt that the foundations of her life grew strong, and that her hopes in this world became steadfast and enduring. Before, a wall

of separation, however slight, had divided them ; they had followed a system of conduct independent of each other, and passed their censure upon the ideas of either. This was over now—they were one—one sense of right—one feeling of happiness ; and when they parted that night, each felt that they truly possessed the other ; and that by mingling every hope and wish, they had confirmed the marriage of their hearts.

CHAPTER IV.

. Think but whither
Now you can go ; what you can do to live ;
How near you have barred all ports to your own
succour.
Except this one that here I open, love.

BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

THE most pleasing thoughts shed their balmy influence on Ethel's repose that night. Edward's scheme of a country inn, where the very freedom would make them more entirely dependent upon each other, was absolutely enchanting. Where we establish ourselves, and look forward to the passage of a long interval of time, we form ties with, and assume duties towards, many of our fellow-creatures, each of

which must diminish the singleness of the soul's devotion towards the selected one. No doubt this is the fitting position for human beings to place themselves in, as affording a greater scope for utility : but for a brief space, to have no occupation but that of contributing to the happiness of him to whom her life was consecrated, appeared to Ethel a very heaven upon earth. It was not that she was narrow-hearted : so much affection demands a spacious mansion for its abode ; but in their present position of struggle and difficulty, there was no possibility of extending her sphere of benevolence, and she gladly concentrated her endeavours in the one object whose happiness was in her hands.

All night, even in sleep, a peculiar sense of calm enjoyment soothed the mind of Ethel, and she awoke in the morning with buoyant spirits, and a soul all alive to its own pleasurable existence. She sat at her little solitary breakfast table, musing with still renewed delight upon the prospect opened before her, when suddenly

she was startled by the vision of an empty purse. What could Villiers intend? She felt assured that his stock was very nearly exhausted, and for herself two sovereigns, which were not sufficient to meet the demands of the last week, was all that she possessed. She tried to recollect if Edward had said any thing that denoted any expectation of receiving money; on the contrary—diving into the recesses of her memory, she called to mind that he had said, “We shall receive your poor little dividend of a hundred pounds, in less than a fortnight, so we shall be able to live, even if Gayland should delay getting the other money—I suppose we have enough to get on till then.”

He had said this inquiringly, and she knew that she had made a sign of assent, though at the time, she had no thought of the real purport of his question or of her answer. What was to be done? The obvious consequence of her reflections was at once to destroy the cherished scheme of going out of town with Villiers. This

was a misfortune too great to bear, and she at last decided upon having again recourse to her aunt. Unused to every money transaction, she had not that terror of obligation, nor dislike of asking, which is so necessary to preserve our independence, and even our sense of justice, through life. Money had always been placed like counters in her hand ; she had never known whence it came, and until her marriage, she had never disposed of more than very small sums. Subsequently Villiers had been the director of their expenses. This was the faulty part of her father's system of education. But Lodore's domestic habits were for a great part founded on experience in foreign countries, and he forgot that an English wife is usually the cashier—the sole controller of the disbursements of her family. It seemed as easy a thing for Ethel to ask for money from Mrs. Fitzhenry, as she knew it would be easy for her to give. In compliance, however, with Villiers's notions, she limited her request to ten pounds, and tried to

word her letter so as to create no suspicion in her aunt's mind with regard to their resources. This task achieved, she dismissed every annoying thought, and when Fanny came to express her hope, that, bleak and snowy as was the day, she did not intend to make her accustomed pilgrimage, with a countenance beaming with delight, she dilated on their plan, and spoke as if on the much-desired Thursday, the gates of Elysium were to be thrown open for her.

There would have appeared something childish in her gladness to the abstracted and philosophic mind of Fanny, but that the real evils of her situation, and the fortitude, touching in its unconscious simplicity, with which she encountered them, commanded respect. Ethel, as well as her friend, was elevated above the common place of life ; she also fostered a state of mind, "lofty and magnificent, fitted rather to command than to obey, not only suffering patiently, but even making light of all human cares ; a grand and dignified self-possession, which fears nothing,

yields to no one, and remains for ever unvanquished." When Fanny, in one of their conversations, while describing the uses of philosophy, had translated this eulogium of its effects from Cicero, Ethel had exclaimed, " This is love—it is love alone that divides us from sordid earth-born thoughts, and causes us to walk alone, girt by its own beauty and power."

Fanny smiled; yet while she saw slavery rather than a proud independence in the creed of Ethel, she admired the warmth of heart which could endow with so much brilliancy a state of privation and solitude. At the present moment, when Mrs. Villiers was rapturously announcing their scheme for leaving London, an expression of pain mantled over Fanny's features; her clear blue eyes became suffused, a large tear gathered on her lashes. " What is the matter?" asked Ethel anxiously.

" That I am a fool—but pardon me, for the folly is already passed away. For the first time you have made it hard for me to keep my soul firm

in its own single existence. I have been debarred from all intercourse with those whose ideas rise above the soil on which they tread, except in my dear books, and I thought I should never be attached to any thing but them. Yet do not think me selfish, Mr. Villiers is quite right—it is much better that you should not be apart—I am delighted with his plan.”

“ Away or near, dear Fanny,” said Ethel, in a caressing tone, “ I never can forget your kindness—never cease to feel the warmest friendship for you. Remember, our fathers were friends, and their children ought to inherit the same faithful attachment.”

Fanny smiled faintly. “ You must not seduce me from my resolves,” she said. “ I know my fate in this world, and I am determined to be true to myself to the end. Yet I am not ungrateful to you, even while I declare, that I shall do my best to forget this brief interval, during which, I have no longer, like Demogorgon, lived alone in my own world, but

become aware that there are ties of sympathy between me and my fellow-creatures, in whose existence I did not believe before."

Fanny's language, drawn from her books, not because she tried to imitate, but because conversing perpetually with them, it was natural that she should adopt their style, was always energetic and imaginative; but her quiet manner destroyed every idea of exaggeration of sentiment: it was necessary to hear her soft and low, but very distinct voice utter her lofty sentiments, to be conscious that the calm of deep waters was the element in which she dwelt—not the fretful breakers that spend themselves in sound.

The day seemed rather long to Ethel, who counted the hours until Thursday. Gladly she laid her head on the pillow at night, and bade adieu to the foregone hours. The first thing that awoke her in the morning, was the post-man's knock; it brought, as she had been promised, a long, long letter from Edward. He

had never before written with so much affection or with such an overflowing of tenderness, that made her the centre of his world—the calm fair lake to receive into its bosom the streams of thought and feeling which flowed from him, and yet which, after all, had their primal source in her. “I am a very happy girl,” thought Ethel, as she kissed the beloved papers, and gazed on them in ecstasy; “more happy than I thought it was ever given us to be in this world.”

She rose and began to dress; she delayed reading more than a line or two, that she might enjoy her dearest pleasure for a longer time—then again, unable to controul her impatience, she sat half dressed, and finished all—and was beginning anew, when there was a tap at her door. It was Fanny. She looked disturbed and anxious, and Ethel’s fears were in a moment awake.

“Something annoying has occurred,” she said; “yet I do not think that there is any thing to dread, though there is a danger to prevent.”

“ Speak quickly,” cried Ethel, “ do not keep me in suspense.”

“ Be calm—it is nothing sudden, it is only a repetition of the old story. A boy has just been here—a boy you gave a sovereign to—do you remember?—the night of your arrival. It seems that he has vowed himself to your service ever since. Those two odious men, who were here once, are often at his master’s place—an alehouse, you know. Well, yesterday night, he overheard them saying, that Mr. Villiers’s resort at the London coffee-house, was discovered, or at least suspected, and that a writ was to be taken out against him in the city.”

“ What does that mean?” cried Ethel.

“ That Mr. Villiers will probably be arrested to-day, or to-morrow, if he remains where he is.”

“ I will go directly to him,” cried Ethel; “ we must leave town at once. God grant that I am not too late !”

Seeing her extreme agitation, Fanny remained

with her—forced her to take some breakfast, and then, fearing that if any thing had really taken place, she would be quite bewildered, asked her permission to accompany her. “Will you indeed come with me?” Ethel exclaimed, “How dear, how good you are! O yes, do come—I can never go through it all alone; I shall die, if I do not find him.”

A hackney coach had been called, and they hastened with what speed they might, to their destination. A kind of panic seized upon Ethel, a tremor shook her limbs, so that when they at last stopped, she was unable to speak. Fanny was about to ask for Mr. Villiers, when an exclamation of joy from Ethel stopped her; Edward had seen them, and was at the coach door. The snow lay thick around on the roofs of the houses, and on every atom of vantage ground it could obtain; it was then snowing, and as the chilly fleece dropped through or was driven about in the dark atmosphere, it spread a most disconsolate appearance over every thing; and

nothing could look more dreary than poor Ethel's jumbling vehicle, with its drooping animals, and the half-frozen driver. Villiers had made up his mind that he should never be mortified by seeing her again in this sort of equipage, and he hurried down, the words of reproach already on his lips, "Is this your promise?" he asked.

"Yes, dearest, it is. Come in, there is danger here.—Come in—we must go directly."

Seeing Fanny, Villiers became aware that there was some absolute cause for their journey, so he obeyed and quickly heard the danger that threatened him. "It would have been better," he said, "that you had come in the carriage, and that we had instantly left town."

"Impossible!" cried Ethel; "till to-morrow—that is quite impossible. We have no money until to-morrow."

"Well, my love, since it is so, we must arrange as well as we can. Do you return home immediately—this cold will kill you. I will

take care of myself, and you can come for me on Thursday evening, as we proposed."

"Do not ask it of me, Edward," said Ethel; "I cannot leave you. I could never live through these two days away from you—you must not desire it—you will kill me."

Edward kissed her pale cheek. "You tremble," he said; "how violently you tremble! Good God! what can we do? What would you have me do?"

"Any thing, so that we remain together. It is of so little consequence where we pass the next twenty-four hours, so that we are together. There are many hotels in town."

"I must not venture to any of these; and then to take you in this miserable manner, without servants, or any thing to command attendance. But you shall have your own way; having deprived you of every other luxury, at least, you shall have your will; which, you know, compensates for every thing with your obstinate sex."

Ethel smiled, rejoicing to find him in so good and accommodating a humour. "Yes, pretty one," he continued, marking her feelings, "you shall be as wretched and uncomfortable as your heart can desire. We will play the incognito in such a style, that if our adventures were printed, they would compete with those of Don Quixote and the fair Dulcinea. But Miss Derham must not be admitted into our vagabondizing—we will not detain her."

"Yet she must know whither we are going, to bring us the letters that will confer freedom on us."

Villiers wrote hastily an address on a card. "You will find us there," he said. "Do not mention names when you come. We shall remain, I suppose, till Thursday."

"But we shall see you some time to-morrow, dear Fanny?" asked Ethel. Already she looked bright and happy; she esteemed herself fortunate to have gained so easily a point she had feared she must struggle for—or perhaps give

up altogether. Fanny left them, and the coachman having received his directions, drove slowly on through the deep snow, which fell thickly on the road; while they, nestling close to each other, were so engrossed by the gladness of re-union, that had Cinderella's godmother transmuted their crazy vehicle for a golden coach, redolent of the perfumes of fairy land, they had scarcely been aware of the change. Their own hearts formed a more real fairy land, which accompanied them whithersoever they went, and could as easily spread its enchantments over the shattered machine in which they now jumbled along, as amidst the cloth of gold and marbles of an eastern palace.

CHAPTER V.

Few people know how little is necessary to live. What is called or thought *hardship* is nothing; *one* unhappy feeling is worse than a thousand years of it.

LORD EDWARD FITZGERALD.

UNCERTAIN what to do, Villiers had hastily determined that they should take up their abode at a little inn near Brixton, to wait till Thursday. He did not know the place except by having passed it, and observed a smart landlady at the door; so he trusted that it would be neat and clean. There was nothing imposing in the appearance of the young pair and their hackney coach, accordingly there was no bustling civility displayed to receive them. However, when the

D 2

fire was once lighted, the old-fashioned sofa drawn near, and dinner ordered, they sat together and felt very happy; outcasts though they were, wanderers from civilized existence, shut out, through poverty, from the refinements and gilt elegancies of life.

One only cloud there was, when Villiers asked his wife an explanation about their resources, and inquired whence she expected to receive money on the following day. Ethel explained. Villiers looked disturbed. There was something almost of anger in his voice, when he said, "And so, Ethel, you feel no compunction in acting in exact opposition to my wishes, my principles, my resolves?"

"But, dear Edward, what can principles have to do with borrowing a few pounds from dear good Aunt Bessy? Besides, we can repay her."

"Be assured that we shall," replied Villiers; "and you will never again, I trust, behave so unjustly by me. There are certain things in

which we must judge and act for ourselves, and the question of money transactions is one. I may suffer—and you, alas ! may also, through poverty ; though you have taken pains to persuade me, that you do not feel the struggles, which, for your sake chiefly, embitter my existence. Yet they are nothing in comparison with the loss of my independence—the sense of obligation—the knowledge that my kind friends can talk over my affairs, take me to task, and call me a burthen to them. Why am I as I am ? I have friends and connexions who would readily assist me at this extremity, if I asked it, and I might turn their kind feelings into sterling gold if I would ; but I have no desire to work this transmutation—I prefer their friendship.”

“ Do you mean,” inquired his wife, “ that your friends would not love you the better for having been of service to you ? ”

“ If they could serve me without annoyance to themselves they might ; but high in rank and

wealthy as many of my relations are, there is not one among them, at least of those to whom I could have recourse, who do not dispose of their resources to the uttermost shilling, in their own way. I then come to interfere with and to disarrange their plans; at first, this might not be much—but presently they would weigh me against the gold I needed, and it might happen, that my scale would kick the beam.

“ I speak for myself not for others; I may be too proud, too sensitive—but so I am. Ever since I knew what pecuniary obligations were, I resolved to lay under such to no man, and this resolve was stronger than my love for you; judge therefore of its force, and the violence you do me, when you would oblige me to act against it. Did I begin to borrow, a train of thoughts would enter the lender’s mind; the consciousness of which, would haunt me like a crime. My actions would be scanned—I should be blamed for this, rebuked for that—even your name, my Ethel, which I would place, like a

star in the sky, far above their mathematical measurements, would become stale in their mouths, and the propriety of our marriage canvassed: could you bear that?"

"I yield to all you say," she answered; "yet this is strange morality. Are generosity, benevolence, and gratitude, to be exploded among us? Is justice, which orders that the rich give of his superfluity to the poor, to be banished from the world?"

"You are eloquent," said Villiers; "but, my little wild American, this is philosophy for the back-woods only. We have got beyond the primeval simplicity of barter and exchange among gentlemen; and it is such if I give gratitude in return for fifty pounds: by-and-by my fellow-trader may grumble at the bargain. All this will become very clear to you hereafter, I fear—when knowledge of the world teaches you what sordid knaves we all are; it is to prevent your learning this lesson in a painful way, that I guard you so jealously from making a wrong step at this crisis."

“ You speak of dreams,” said Ethel, “ as if dear aunt Bessy would feel any thing but pleasure in sending her mite to her own dear niece.”

“ I have told you what I wish,” replied her husband, “ my honour is in your hands ; and I implore you, on this point, to preserve it in the way I desire. There is but one relationship that authorizes any thing like community of goods, it is that of parent and child ; but we are orphans, dearest—step-children, who are not permitted to foster our filial sentiments. My father is unworthy of his name—the animal who destroys its offspring at its birth is merciful in comparison with him : had he cast me off at once, I should have hardened my hands with labour, and earned my daily bread ; but I was trained to “ high-born necessities,” and have all the “ wide wants and narrow powers” * of the heir of wealth. But let us dismiss this ungrateful subject. I never willingly advert, even in my own mind, to my father’s unpaternal

* The Cenci.

conduct. Let us instead fancy, sweet love, that we were born to what we have—that we are cottagers, the children of mechanics, or wanderers in a barbarous country, where money is not ; and imagine that this repose, this cheerful fire, this shelter from the pelting snow without, is an unexpected blessing. Strip a man bare to what nature made him, and place him here, and what a hoard of luxury and wealth would not this room contain ! In the Illinois, love, few mansions could compete with this.”

This was speaking in a language which Ethel could easily comprehend ; she had several times wished to express this very idea, but she feared to hurt the refined and exclusive feelings of her husband. A splendid dwelling, costly living, and many attendants, were with her the adjuncts, not the material, of life. If the stage on which she played her part was to be so decorated, it was well ; if otherwise, the change did not merit her attention. Love scoffed at such idle trappings, and could build his tent of can-

vas, and sleep close nestled in her heart as softly, being only the more lovely and the more true, from the absence of every meretricious ornament.

This was another of Ethel's happy evenings, when she felt drawn close to him she loved, and found elysium in the intimate union of their thoughts. The dusky room showed them but half to each other; and the looks of each, beaming with tenderness, drank life from one another's gaze. The soft shadows thrown on their countenances, gave a lamp-like lustre to their eyes, in which the purest spirit of affection sat, weaving such unity of sentiment, such strong bonds of attachment, as made all life dwindle to a point, and freighted the passing minute with the hopes and fears of their entire existence. Not much was said, and their words were childish—words

Intellette dar loro soli ambedui,

which a listener would have judged to be

meaningless. But the mystery of love gave a deep sense to each syllable. The hours flew lightly away. There was nothing to interrupt, nothing to disturb. Night came and the day was at an end; but Ethel looked forward to the next, with faith in its equal felicity, and did not regret the fleet passage of time.

They had been asked during the evening if they were going by any early coach on the following morning, and a simple negative was given. On that morning they sat at their breakfast, with some diminution of the sanguine hopes of the previous evening. For morning is the time for action, of looking forward, of expectation,—and they must spend this in waiting, cooped up in a little room, overlooking no cheering scene. A high road, thickly covered with snow, on which various vehicles were perpetually passing, was immediately before them. Opposite was a row of mean-looking houses, between which might be distinguished low fields buried in snow; and the dreary dark-looking sky bending over

all, added to the forlorn aspect of nature. Villiers was very impatient to get away, yet another day must be passed here, and there was no help.

On the breakfast-table the waiter had placed the bill of the previous day ; it remained unnoticed, and he left it on the table when the things were taken away. " I wonder when Fanny will come," said Ethel.

" Perhaps not at all to-day," observed Villiers, " she knows that we intend to remain till to-morrow here ; and if your aunt's letter is delayed till then, I see no chance of her coming, nor any use in it."

" But Aunt Bessy will not delay ; her answer is certain of arriving this morning."

" So you imagine, love. You know little of the various chances that wait upon borrowing."

Soon after, unable to bear confinement to the house, uneasy in his thoughts, and desirous a little to dissipate them by exercise, Villiers went out. Ethel, taking a small Shakspeare, which

her husband had had with him at the coffee-house, occupied herself by reading, or turning from the written page to her own thoughts, gave herself up to reverie, dwelling on many an evanescent idea, and reverting delightedly to many scenes, which her memory recalled. She was one of those who “know the pleasures of solitude, when we hold commune alone with the tranquil solemnity of nature.” The thought of her father, of the Illinois, and the measureless forest rose before her, and in her ear was the dashing of the stream which flowed near their abode. Her light feet again crossed the prairie, and a thousand appearances of sky and earth departed for ever, were retraced in her brain. “Would not Edward be happy there?” she thought: “why should we not go? We should miss dear Horatio; but what else could we regret that we leave behind? and perhaps he would join us, and then we should be quite happy.” And then her fancy pictured her new home and all its delights, till her

eyes were suffused with tender feeling, as her imagination sketched a variety of scenes—the pleasant labours of cultivation, the rides, the hunting, the boating, all common-place occurrences, which, attended on by love, were exalted into a perpetual gorgeous procession of beatified hours. And then again she allowed to herself that Europe or America could contain the same delights. She recollected Italy, and her feelings grew more solemn and blissful as she meditated on the wondrous beauty and changeful but deep interest of that land of memory.

Villiers did not return for some hours;—he also had indulged in reverie—long-drawn, but not quite so pleasant as that of his inexperienced wife. The realities of life were kneaded up too entirely with his prospects and schemes, for them to assume the fairy hues that adorned Ethel's. He could not see the end to his present struggle for the narrowest independence. Very slender hopes had been held out to him;

and thus he was to drag out an embittered existence, spent upon sordid cares, till his father died—an ungrateful idea, from which he turned with a sigh. He walked speedily, on account of the cold; and as his blood began to circulate more cheerily in his frame, a change came over the tenor of his thoughts. From the midst of the desolation in which he was lost, a vision of happiness arose, that forced itself on his speculations, in spite, as he imagined, of his better reason. The image of an elegant home, here or in Italy, adorned by Ethel—cheered by the presence of friends, unshadowed by any cares, presented itself to his mind with strange distinctness and pertinacity. At no time had Villiers loved so passionately as now. The difficulties of their situation had exalted her, who shared them with such cheerful fortitude, into an angel of consolation. The pride of man in possessing the affections of this lovely and noble-minded creature, was blended with the tenderest desire of protecting and serving

her His heart glowed with honest joy at the reflection that her happiness depended upon him solely, and that he was ready to devote his life to secure it. Was there any action too arduous, any care too minute, to display his gratitude and his perfect affection? As his recollection came back, he found that he was at a considerable distance from her, so he swiftly turned his steps homeward, (that was his home where she was,) and scarcely felt that he trod earth as he recollected that each moment carried him nearer, and that he should soon meet the fond gaze of the kindest, sweetest eyes in the world.

Thus they met, with a renewed joy, after a short absence, each reaping, from their separate meditations, a fresh harvest of loving thoughts and interchange of grateful emotion. Great was the pity that such was their situation—that circumstances, all mean and trivial, drew them from their heaven-high elevation, to the more sordid cares of this dirty planet.

Yet why name it pity? their pure natures
could turn the grovelling substance presented
to them, to ambrosial food for the sustenance of
love.

CHAPTER VI.

There's a bliss beyond all that the minstrel has told,
When two that are linked in one heavenly tie,
With heart never changing, and brow never cold,
Love on through all ills, and love on till they die.

LALLA ROOKH.

VILLIERS had not been returned long, when the waiter came in, and informed them, that his mistress declined serving their dinner, till her bill of the morning was paid ; and then he left the room. The gentle pair looked at each other, and laughed. "We must wait till Fanny comes, I fear," said Ethel ; "for my purse is literally empty."

"And if Miss Derham should not come?" remarked Villiers.

“But she will!—she has delayed, but I am perfectly certain that she will come in the course of the day : I do not feel the least doubt about it.”

To quicken the passage of time, Ethel employed herself in netting a purse, (the inutility of which Villiers smilingly remarked,) while her husband read to her some of the scenes from Shakspeare’s play of “Troilus and Cressida.” The profound philosophy, and intense passion, of this drama, adorned by the most magnificent poetry that can even be found in the pages of this prince of poets, caused each to hang attentive and delighted upon their occupation. As it grew dark, Villiers stirred up the fire, and still went on ; till having with difficulty decyphered the lines—

“She was beloved—she loved ;—she is, and doth ;
But still sweet love is food for fortune’s tooth,”—

he closed the book. “It is in vain,” he said ;
“our liberator does not come ; and these churls
will not give us lights.”

“It is early yet, dearest,” replied Ethel;—
“not yet four o’clock. Would Troilus and Cressida have repined at having been left darkling a few minutes? How much happier we are than all the heroes and heroines that ever lived or were imagined! they grasped at the mere shadow of the thing, whose substance we absolutely possess. Let us know and acknowledge our good fortune. God knows, I do, and am beyond words grateful!”

“It is much to be grateful for—sharing the fortunes of a ruined man!”

“You do not speak as Troilus does,” replied Ethel smiling: “he knew better the worth of love compared with worldly trifles.”

“You would have me protest, then,” said Villiers;—

“But, alas!

I am as true as truth’s simplicity,
And simpler than the infancy of truth;”

so that all I can say is, that you are a very ill-used little girl, to be mated as you are—so

buried, with all your loveliness, in this obscurity—so bound, though akin to heaven, to the basest dross of earth.”

“You are poetical, dearest, and I thank you. For my own part, I am in love with ill luck. I do not think we should have discovered how very dear we are to each other, had we sailed for ever on a summer sea.”

Such talk, a little prolonged, at length dwindled to silence. Edward drew her nearer to him; and as his arm encircled her waist, she placed her sweet head on his bosom, and they remained in silent reverie. He, as with his other hand he played with her shining ringlets, and parted them on her fair brow, was disturbed in thought, and saddened by a sense of degradation. Not to be able to defend the angelic creature, who depended on him, from the world's insults, galled his soul, and embittered even the heart's union that existed between them. She did not think—she did know of these things. After many minutes of silence, she said,—“I

have been trying to discover why it is absolute pleasure to suffer pain for those we love."

"Pleasure in pain!—you speak riddles."

"I do," she replied, raising her head; "but I have divined this. The great pleasure of love is derived from sympathy—the feeling of union—of unity. Any thing that makes us alive to the sense of love—that imprints deeper on our plastic consciousness the knowledge of the existence of our affection, causes an increase of happiness. There are two things to which we are most sensitive—pleasure and pain. But habit can somewhat dull the first; and that which was in its newness, ecstasy—our being joined for ever—becomes, like the air we breathe, a thing we could not live without, but yet in which we are rather passively than actively happy. But when pain comes to awaken us to a true sense of how much we love—when we suffer for one another's dear sake—the consciousness of attachment swells our hearts: we are recalled from the forgetfulness engendered by custom; and the awakening and

renewal of the sense of affection brings with it a joy, that sweetens to its dregs the bitterest cup."

"Encourage this philosophy, dear Ethel," replied Villiers; "you will need it: but it shames me to think that I am your teacher in this mournful truth." As he spoke, his whole frame was agitated by tenderness and grief. Ethel could see, by the dull fire-light, a tear gather on his eye-lashes: it fell upon her hand. She threw her arms round him, and pressed him to her heart with a passionate gush of weeping, occasioned partly by remorse at having so moved him, and partly by her heart's overflowing with the dear security of being loved.

They had but a little recovered from this scene, when the waiter, bringing in lights, announced Miss Derham. Her coming had been full of disasters. After many threatenings, and much time consumed in clumsy repairs, her hackney-coach had fairly broken down: she

had walked the rest of the way ; but they were much further from town than she expected ; and thus she accounted for her delay. She brought no news ; but held in her hand the letter that contained the means of freeing them from their awkward predicament.

“We will not stay another minute in this cursed place,” said Villiers : “we will go immediately to Salt Hill, where I intended to take you to-morrow. I can return by one of the many stages which pass continually, to keep my appointment with Gayland ; and be back with you again by night. So if these stupid people possess a post-chaise, we will be gone directly.”

Ethel was well pleased with this arrangement ; and it was put in execution immediately. The chaise and horses were easily procured. They set Fanny down in their way through town. Ethel tried to repay her kindness by heartfelt thanks ; and she, in her placid way, showed clearly how pleased she was to serve them.

Leaving her in Piccadilly, not far from her

own door, they pursued their way to Salt Hill ; and it seemed as if, in this mere change of place, they had escaped from a kind of prison, to partake again in the immunities and comforts of civilized life. Ethel was considerably fatigued when she arrived ; and her husband feared that he had tasked her strength too far. The falling and fallen snow clogged up the roads, and their journey had been long. She slept, indeed, the greater part of the way, her head resting on him ; and her languor and physical suffering were soothed by emotions the most balmy and by the gladdening sense of confidence and security.

They arrived at Salt Hill late in the evening. The hours were precious ; for early on the following day, Villiers was obliged to return to town. On inquiry, he found that his best mode was to go by a night-coach from Bath, which would pass at seven in the morning. They were awake half the night, talking of their hopes, their plans, their probable deliverance from their besetting annoyances. By this time

Ethel had taught her own phraseology, and Villiers had learned to believe that whatever must happen would fall upon both, and that no separation could take place fraught with any good to either.

When Ethel awoke, late in the morning, Villiers was gone. Her watch told her, indeed, that it was near ten o'clock, and that he must have departed long before. She felt inclined to reproach him for leaving her, though only for a few hours, without an interchange of adieu. In truth, she was vexed that he was not there: the world appeared to her so blank, without his voice to welcome her back to it from out of the regions of sleep. While this slight cloud of ill-humour (may it be called?) was passing over her mind, she perceived a little note, left by her husband, lying on her pillow. Kissing it a thousand times, she read its contents, as if they possessed talismanic power. 'They breathed the most passionate tenderness: they besought her, as she loved him, to take care of herself, and to

keep up her spirits until his return, which would be as speedy as the dove flies back to its nest, where its sweet mate fondly expects him. With these assurances and blessings to cheer her, Ethel arose. The sun poured its wintry yet cheering beams into the parlour, and the sparkling, snow-clad earth glittered beneath. She wrapped herself in her cloak, and walked into the garden of the hotel. Long immured in London, living as if its fogs were the universal vesture of all things, her spirits rose to exultation and delight, as she looked on the blue sky spread cloudlessly around. As the pure breeze freshened her cheek, a kind of transport seized her; her spirit took wings; she felt as if she could float on the bosom of the air—as if there was a sympathy in nature, whose child and nursling she was, to welcome her back to her haunts, and to reward her bounteously for coming. The trees, all leafless and snow-bedecked, were friends and intimates: she kissed their rough barks, and then laughed

at her own folly at being so rapt. The snow-drop, as it peeped from the ground, was a thing of wonder and mystery ; and the shapes of frost, beautiful forms to be worshipped. All sorrow—all care passed away, and left her mind as clear and bright as the unclouded heavens that bent over her.

CHAPTER VII.

Herein

Shall my captivity be made my happiness ;

Since what I lose in freedom, I regain

With interest.

BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

THE glow of enthusiasm and gladness, thus kindled in her soul, faded slowly as the sun descended ; and human tenderness returned in full tide upon her. She longed for Edward to speak to ; when would he come back ? She walked a little way on the London road ; she returned : still her patience was not exhausted. The sun's orb grew red and dusky as it approached the horizon : she returned to the house. It was yet early : Edward could not be ex-

pected yet: he had promised to come as soon as possible; but he had prepared her for the likelihood of his arrival only by the mail at night. It was long since she had written to Saville. Cooped up in town, saddened by her separation from her husband, or enjoying the brief hours of reunion, she had felt disinclined to write. Her enlivened spirits now prompted her to pour out some of their overflowings to him. She did not allude to any of the circumstances of their situation, for Edward had forbidden that topic: still she had much to say; for her heart was full of benevolence to all mankind; besides her attachment to her husband, the prospect of becoming a mother within a few months, opened another source of tenderness; there seemed to be a superabundance of happiness within her, a portion of which she desired to impart to those she loved.

Daylight had long vanished, and Villiers did not return. She felt uneasy:—of course he would come by the mail; yet if he should not—what could prevent him? Conjectures would

force themselves on her, unreasonable, she told herself; yet her doubts were painful, and she listened attentively each time that the sound of wheels grew, and again faded, upon her ear. If the vehicle stopped, she was in a state of excitation that approached alarm. She knew not what she feared; yet her disquiet increased into anxiety. "Shall I ever see him again?" were words that her lips did not utter, and yet which lingered in her heart, although unaccompanied by any precise idea to her understanding.

She had given a thousand messages to the servants;—and at last the mail arrived. She heard a step—it was the waiter:—"The gentleman is not come, ma'am," he said. "I knew it," she thought;—"yet why? why?" At one time she resolved to set off for town; yet whither to go—where to find him? An idea struck her, that he had missed the mail; but as he would not leave her a prey to uncertainty, he would come by some other conveyance. She got a little comfort from this notion, and resumed her occupation of waiting; though the vague-

ness of her expectations rendered her a thousand times more restless than before. And all was vain. The mail had arrived at eleven o'clock—at twelve she retired to her room. She read again and again his note: his injunction, that she should take care of herself, induced her to go to bed at a little after one; but sleep was still far from her. Till she could no longer expect—till it became certain that it must be morning before he could come, she did not close her eyes. As her last hope quitted her, she wept bitterly. Where was the joyousness of the morning?—the exuberant delight with which her veins had tingled, which had painted life as a blessing? She hid her face in her pillow, and gave herself up to tears, till sleep at last stole over her senses.

Early in the morning her door opened and her curtain was drawn aside. She awoke immediately, and saw Fanny Derham standing at her bed-side.

“Edward! where is he?” she exclaimed, starting up.

“ Well, quite well,” replied Fanny : “ do not alarm yourself, dear Mrs. Villiers,—he has been arrested.”

“ I must go to him immediately. Leave me for a little while, dear Fanny,—I will dress and come to you ; do you order the chaise meanwhile. I can hear every thing as we are going to town.”

Ethel trembled violently—her speech was rapid but inarticulate ; the paleness that overspread her face, blanching even her marble brow, and the sudden contraction of her features, alarmed Fanny. The words she had used in communicating her intelligence were cabalistic to Ethel, and her fears were the more intolerable because mysterious and undefined ; the blood trickled cold in her veins, and a chilly moisture stood on her forehead. She exerted herself violently to conquer this weakness, but it shackled her powers, as bands of rope would her limbs, and after a few moments she sank back on her pillow almost bereft of life. Fanny sprang to the

bell, then sprinkled her with water ; some salts were procured from the landlady, and gradually the colour revisited her cheeks, and her frame resumed its functions—an hysteric fit, the first she had ever had, left her at last exhausted but more composed. She herself became frightened lest illness should keep her from Villiers ; she exerted herself to become tranquil, and lay for some time without speaking or moving. A little refreshment contributed to restore her, and she turned to Fanny with a faint sweet smile, “ You see,” said she, “ what a weak, foolish thing I am ; but I am well now, quite rallied—there must be no more delay.”

Her cheerful voice and lively manner gave her friend confidence. Fanny was one who believed much in the mastery of mind, and felt sure that nothing would be so prejudicial to Mrs. Villiers as contradiction, and obstacles put in the way of her attaining the object of her wishes. In spite therefore of the good people about, who insisted that the most disastrous

consequences would ensue, she ordered the horses, and prepared for their immediate journey to town. Ethel repaid her cares with smiles, while she restrained her curiosity, laid as it were a check on her too impatient movements, and forced a calm of manner which gave her friend courage to proceed.

It was not until they were on their way that the object of their journey was mentioned. Fanny then spoke of the arrest as a trifling circumstance—mentioned bail, and twenty things, which Ethel only comprehended to be mysterious methods of setting him free; and then also she asked the history of what had happened. The tale was soon told. The moment Mr. Villiers had entered Piccadilly he had caused a coach to be called, but on passing to it from the stage, two men entered it with him, whose errand was too easily explained. He had driven first to his solicitor's, hoping to put every thing in train for his instant liberation. The day was consumed in these fruitless endea-

vours—he did not give up hope till past ten at night, when he sent to Fanny, asking her to go down to Mrs. Villiers as early as possible in the morning, and to bring her up to town. His wish was, he said, that Ethel should take up her abode at Mrs. Derham's till this affair could be arranged, and they were enabled to leave London. His note was hurried; he promised that another, more explicit, should await his wife on her arrival.

“You will tell the driver,” said Ethel, when this story was finished, “to drive to Edward's prison. I would not stay away five minutes from him in his present situation to purchase the universe.”

Any one but Miss Derham might have resisted Ethel's wish—have argued with her, and irritated her by the display of obstacles and inconveniences. It was not Fanny's method ever to oppose the desires of others. They knew best, she affirmed, their own sensations, and what was most fitting for them. What is

best for me, habit, education, and a different texture of character, may render the worst for them. In the present instance, also, she saw that Ethel's feelings were almost too high wrought for her strength—that opposition, by making a further call on her powers, might upset them wholly. She had besides, the deepest respect for her attachment to her husband, and was willing to reward it by bringing her to him without delay. Having thus fortunately fallen into reasonable hands, guided by one who could understand her character, and not torture her by forcing notions the opposite of those on which she felt herself compelled to act, Ethel became tranquil, and saw the mere panic of inexperience in her previous excessive alarm.

They now approached London. Fanny called the post-boy to the window of the chaise, and gave him directions, at which he a little stared, but said nothing. She gave things their own names, and never dreamt of saving appear-

ances, as it is called. What ought to be done, that she dared do in the face of the whole world, and therefore to make a mystery of their destination never once occurred to her. They drove through the long interminable suburbs—through Piccadilly and the Strand. Ethel's cheeks flushed with the excitement, and something like apprehension made her heart flutter. She had endeavoured to form an image in her own mind of whither they were going—it was vague and therefore frightful—but Edward was there, and she also would share the horrors of his prison-house.

They passed through Temple Bar, and going down an obscure street or two, stopped at a dingy door-way. “This is not right,” said Ethel, almost gasping for breath, “this is not a prison.”

“Something very like it, as you will find too soon,” said her friend.

Still Ethel's imagination was relieved by the absence of the massy walls, the portentous gates,

the gloomy immensity of an absolute prison. The door of the house being opened, Ethel stepped out from the chaise and asked for Mr. Villiers. The man whom she addressed hesitated, but Ethel had learnt one only worldly lesson, which was, whenever she needed the services of people of the lower orders, to disseminate money plentifully. Her purse was in her hand, and she gave a sovereign to the man, who then at once showed them upstairs; which she ascended, though every limb nearly refused to perform its office as she approached the spot where again she was to find—to see him, whose image lived eternally in her heart, and whom it was the sole joy of her life to wait on, to be sheltered by, to live near.

The door was opened. In the dingy, dusty room, beside the fire, which looked as if it could not burn, and was never meant to warm even the black neglected grate, Villiers sat, reading. His first emotion was shame when he saw Ethel enter. There was no accord between her spot-

less loveliness and his squalid prison-room. Any one who has seen a sunbeam suddenly enter and light up a scene of housewifely neglect, and vulgar discomfort, and felt how obtrusive it rendered all that might be half-forgotten in the shade, can picture how the simple elegance of Ethel displayed yet more distinctly to her husband the worse than beggarly scene in which she found him. His cheeks flushed, and almost he would have turned away. He would have reproached, but a tenderness and an elevation of feeling animated her expressive countenance, which turned the current of his thoughts. Whether it were their fate to suffer the extremes of fortune in the savage wilderness, or in the more appalling privations of civilized life—love, and the poetry of love accompanied her, and gilded, and irradiated the commonest forms of penury. She looked at him, and her eyes then glanced to the barred windows. As Fanny and their conductor left them, she heard the key turn in the lock with an im-

pertinent intrusive loudness. She felt pained for him, but for herself it was as if the world and all its cares were locked out, and as if in this near association with him, she reaped the reward of all her previous anxiety. There was no repining in her thoughts, no dejection in her manner; Villiers could read in her open countenance, as plainly as through the clearest crystal, the sentiments that were passing in her mind—it was something more satisfied than resignation, more contented than fortitude. It was a knowledge that whatever evil might attend her lot, the good so far outweighed it, that, for his sake only, could she advert to any feeling of distress. It was a consciousness of being in her place, and of fulfilling her duty, accompanied by a sort of rapture in remembering how thrice dear and hallowed that duty was. Angels could not feel as she did, for they cannot sacrifice to those they love; yet there was in her that absence of all self-emanating pain, which is the characteristic of what we are told of the angelic essences.

As when at night autumnal winds are howling, and vast masses of winged clouds are driven with indescribable speed across the sky—we note the islands of dark ether, built round by the white fleecy shapes; and as we mark the stars which gem their unfathomable depth, silence and sublime tranquillity appear to have found a home in that deep vault, and we love to dwell on the peace and beauty that live there, while the clouds still rush on, and the face of the lower heaven is more mutable than water. Thus the mind of Ethel, surrounded by the world's worst forms of adversity, showed clear and serene, entirely possessed by the repose of love. It was impossible but that, in spite of shame and regret, Villiers should not participate in these feelings. He gave himself up to the softening influence: he knew not how to repine on his own account; Ethel's affection demanded to stand in place of prosperity, and he could not refuse to admit so dear a claim.

The door had closed on them, and every outlet to liberty, or the enjoyment of life, was

barred up. Edward drew Ethel towards him and kissed her fondly. Their eyes met, and the speechless tenderness that beamed from hers reached his heart and soothed every ruffled feeling. Sitting together, and interchanging a few words of comfort and hope, mingled with kind looks and affectionate caresses, they neither of them remembered indignity nor privation. The tedious mechanism of civilized life, and the odious interference of their fellow-creatures were forgotten, and they were happy.

CHAPTER VIII.

Veggo pur troppo
Che favola è la vita,
E la favola mia non è compita.

PETRARCA.

THE darker months of winter had passed away, and the chilly, blighting English spring begun. Towards the end of March Lady Lodore came to town. She had long ago, in her days of wealth, fitted up a house in Park Lane, so she returned to it, as to a home—if home it might be called—where no one welcomed her—where none sat beside her at the domestic hearth.

For the first time she felt keenly this circumstance. During her mother's lifetime she had

had her constantly for a companion, and afterwards as events pressed upon her, and while the anguish she felt upon Horatio Saville's marriage was still fresh, she had not reverted to her lonely position as the source of pain.

The haughty, the firm, the self-exalting soul of Cornelia had borne up long. She had often felt that she walked on the borders of a precipice, and that if once she admitted sentiments of regret, she should plunge without retrieve into a gulph, dark, portentous, inextricable. She had often repeated to herself that fate should not vanquish her, and that in spite of despair she would be happy : it is true that the misery occasioned by Saville's marriage was a canker at her heart, for which there was no cure, but she had recourse to dissipation that she might endeavour to forget it. A sad and ineffectual remedy. She was surrounded by admirers, whom she disdained, and by friends to whom she would have died rather than betray the naked misery of her soul. She had never planned nor thought

of marriage. The report concerning the Earl of D—— was one of those which the world always makes current, when two persons of opposite sexes are, by any chance, thrown much together. His sister was Lady Lodore's friend, and she had chaperoned her, and been of assistance to her, during the courtship of the gentleman who was at present her husband. It was their house that Lady Lodore had just quitted on arriving in town. The new-born happiness of early wedded life had been a scene to call her back to thoughts which were the sources of the bitterest anguish. She abhorred herself that she could envy, that she could desire to exchange places with, any created being. She abridged her visit, and fancied that she should regain peace in the independence of her own home. But the enjoyment of liberty was cold in her heart, and loneliness added a freezing chilliness to her feeling.

The mind of Cornelia was much above the world she lived in, though she had sacrificed

all to it ; and, so to speak, much above herself. Take pride from her, and there was understanding, magnanimity, and great kindliness of disposition : but pride had been the wall of China to shut up all her better qualities, and to keep them from communicating with the world beyond ;—pride, which grew strong by resistance, and towered above every aggressor ; —pride, which crumbled away, when time and change were its sole assailants, till her inner being was left unprotected and bare.

She found herself alone in the world. She felt that her life was aimless, unprofitable, blank. She was humiliated and saddened by her relative position in the world. She did not think of her daughter as a resource ; she was in the hands of her enemies, and no hope lay there. She entertained the belief that Mrs. Villiers was weak both in character and understanding ; and that to make any attempt to interest herself in her, would end in disappointment, if not disgust. Imagining, as we are all apt to do,

how we should act in another person's place, she had formed a notion of what she would have done, had she been Ethel ; and as nothing was done, she almost despised, and quite pitied her. No ! there was no help. She was alone ;—none loved, none cared for her ; and the flower of the field, which a child plucks and wears for an hour, and then casts aside, was of more worth than she.

Every amusement grew tedious—all society vacant and dull. When she came back from dinners or assemblies, to her luxurious but empty abode, the darkest thoughts, engendered by spleen, hung over its threshold, and welcomed her return. At such times, she would dismiss her attendant, and remain half the night by her fireside, encouraging sickly reveries, struggling with the fate that bound her, yet unable in any way to make an effort for freedom.

“Time”—thus would her thoughts fashion themselves—“yes, time rolls on, and what does

it bring? I live in a desert ; its barren sands feed my hour-glass, and they come out fruitless as they went in. Months change their names—years their cyphers : my brow is sadly trenched ; the bloom of youth is faded : my mind gathers wrinkles. What will become of me ?

“ Hopes of my youth, where are ye ?—my aspirations, my pride, my belief that I could grasp and possess all things ? Alas ! there is nothing of all this ! My soul lies in the dust ; and I look up to know that I have been playing with shadows, and that I am fallen for ever ! What do I see around me ? The tide of life is ebbing fast ! I had fancied that pearls and gold would have been left by the retiring waves ; and I find only barren, lonely sands ! No voice reaches me from across the waters—no one stands beside me on the shore ! Would—O would I could lay my head on the spray-sprinkled beach, and sleep for ever !

“ This is madness !—these incoherent images that throng my brain are the ravings of insanity !

—yet what greater madness, than to know that love, affection, the charities of life, the hopes of existence, are empty words for me. Am I indeed to have done with these? What is it that still moves up and down in my soul, making me feel as if something might yet be accomplished? Is it that the ardour of youth is not yet tamed? Alas! my youth has departed for ever. Yet wherefore these sighs, which wrap an eternity of wretchedness in their evanescent breath? —why these tears, that, flowing from the inmost fountains of the soul, endeavour to give passage to the flood of sorrow that deluges and overwhelms it? The husband of my youth!—the thought of him passes like a shadow across me! Had he borne with me a little longer—had I submitted to his controul—how different my destiny had been! But I will not think of that—I do not! A mightier storm than any he could raise has swept across me since, and laid all waste. My soul has been set upon a hope, which has vanished, and desolation has come in its room. Could God, in his anger,

bestow a bitterer curse on a condemned spirit, than that which weighs on me, when I reflect, that through my own fault I lost him, whom but to see was paradise? The thought haunts me like a crime; yet when is it absent from me?—it sleeps with me, rises with me—it is by me now, and I would willingly die only to dismiss it for ever.

“Miserable Cornelia! Thou hast been courted, lauded, waited on, loved!—it is all over! I am alone! My poor, poor mother!—my much reviled, my dearest mother!—by you, at least, I was valued! Ah! why are you gone, leaving your wretched child alone?

“O that I could take wings and rise from out of the abyss into which I am fallen! Can I not, myself being miserable, take pleasure in the pleasure of others; and by force of strong sympathy, forget my selfish woes? With whom can I sympathize? None desire my care, and all would repay my officiousness with ingratitude, perhaps with scorn. Once I could assist

the poor; now I am poor myself: my limited means scarce suffice to keep me in that station in society, from which, did I once descend, I were indeed trampled upon and destroyed for ever. Tears rush from my eyes—my heart sinks within me, as I look forward. Again the same cares, the same coil, the same bitter result. Hopes held out, only to be crushed; affections excited, only to be scattered to the winds. I blamed myself for struggling too much with fate, for rowing against wind and tide, for resolving to controul the events that form existence: now I yield—I have long yielded—I have let myself drift, as I hoped, into a quiet creek, where indifference and peace ruled the hour; and lo! it is a whirlpool, to swallow all I had left of enjoyment upon earth!”

It was not until she had exhausted herself by these gloomy and restless reflections, that she laid her head upon her pillow, and tried to sleep. Morning usually dawned before she closed her eyes; and it was nearly noon before

she rose, weary and unrefreshed. It was with a struggle that she commenced a new day—a day that was to be cheered by no event nor feeling capable of animating her to any sense of joy. She had never occupied herself by intellectual exertion : her employments had been the cultivation of what are called accomplishments merely ; and when now she reverted to these, it was with bitterness. She remembered the interval when she had been inspirited by the delightful wish to please Horatio. Now none cared how the forlorn Cornelia passed her time ;—no one would hang enraptured on her voice, or hail with gladness the developement of some new talent. “It is the same,” she thought, “how I get rid of the heavy hours, so that they go. I have but to give myself up to the sluggish stream that bears me on to old age, not more bereft or unregarded than these wretched years.”

Thus she lingered idly through the morning ; her only enjoyment being, when she secured to herself a solitary drive, and reclining

back in her carriage, felt herself safe from every intrusion, and yet enjoying a succession of objects, that a little varied the tenor of her thoughts. She had deserted the park, and sought unfrequented drives in the environs of London. Evening at last came, and with it her uninteresting engagements, which yet she found better than entire seclusion. Forced to rouse herself to adopt, as a mask, the smiling appearance which had been natural to her for many years, she often abhorred every one around her; and yet, hating herself more, took refuge among them, from her own society. Her chief care was to repress any manifestation of her despair, which too readily rose to her lips or in her eyes. The glorious hues of sunset—the subduing sounds of music—even the sight of a beautiful girl, resplendent with happiness and youth, moving gracefully in dance—had power to move her to tears: her blood seemed to curdle and grow thick, while gloomy shadows mantled over her features. Often, she could

scarcely forbear expressing the bitterness of her feelings, and indulging in acrimonious remarks on the deceits of life, and the inanity of all things. It seemed to her, sometimes, that she must die if she did not give vent to the still increasing horror with which she regarded the whole system of the world.

Nor were her sufferings always thus negative. One evening, especially, a young travelled gentleman approached her, with all the satisfaction painted on his countenance, which he felt at having secured a topic for the entertainment of the fashionable Lady Lodore.

“You are intimate with the Misses Saville,” he said; “what charming girls they are! I have just left them at Naples, where they have been spending the carnival. I saw them almost every day, and capitally we enjoyed ourselves. Their Italian sister-in-law spirited them up to mask, and to make a real carnival of it. A most lovely woman that. Did you ever see Mrs. Saville, Lady Lodore?”

“Never,” replied his auditress.

“Such eyes ! Gazelles, and stars, and suns, and the whole range of poetic imagery, might be sought in vain, to do justice to her large dark eyes. She is very young—scarcely twenty : and to see her with her child, is positively a finer tableau than any Raphael or Correggio in the world. She has a little girl, not a year old, with golden hair, and eyes as black as the mother’s—the most beautiful little thing, and so intelligent. Saville doats on it : no wonder—he is not himself handsome, you know ; though the lovely Clorinda would stab me if she heard me say so. She positively adores him. You should have seen them together.”

Lady Lodore turned on him one of her sweetest smiles, and in her blindest tone, said, “If you could only get me an ice from that servant, who I see immovable behind those dear, wonderful dowagers, you would so oblige me.”

He was gone in a minute ; and on his return,

Lady Lodore was so deeply engrossed in being persuaded to go to the next drawing-room, by the young and new-married Countess of G——, that she could only reward him with another heavenly smile. He was obliged to take his carnival at Naples to some other listener.

Cornelia scarcely closed her eyes that night. The thought of the happy wife and lovely child of Saville, pierced her as with remorse. She had entirely broken off her acquaintance with his family, so that she was ignorant of Clorinda's disposition, and readily fancied that she was as happy as she believed that the wife of Horatio Saville must be. She would not acknowledge that she was wicked enough to repine at her felicity; but that he should be rendered happy by any other woman than herself—that any other woman should have become the sharer of his dearest affections, stung her to the core. Yet why should she regret? She were well exchanged for one so lovely and so young. At the age of thirty-

four, which she had now reached, Cornelia persuaded herself, that the name of beauty was a mockery as applied to her—though her own glass might have told her otherwise; for time had dealt lightly with her, so that the extreme fascination of her manner, and the animation and intelligence of her countenance, made her compete with many younger beauties. She felt that she was deteriorated from the angelic being she had seemed when she first appeared as Lodore's bride; and this made all compliments show false and vain. Now she figured to herself the dark eyes of the Neapolitan; and easily believed that the memory of her would contrast, like a faded picture, with the rich hues of Clorinda's face; while her sad and withered feelings were in yet greater opposition to the vivacity she had heard described and praised—to the triumphant and glad feelings of a beloved wife. It seemed to her as if she must weep for ever, and yet that tears were unavailing to diminish

in any degree the sorrow that weighed so heavily at her heart. These reflections sat like a night-mare on her pillow, troubling the repose she in vain courted. She arose in the morning, scarcely conscious that she had slept at all—languid from exhaustion—her sufferings blunted by their very excess.

CHAPTER IX.

O, where have I been all this time ? How 'friended
That I should lose myself thus desp'rately,
And none for pity show me how I wandered !

BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

WHILE it was yet too early for visitors, and before she had ordered herself to be denied to every one, as she intended to do, she was surprised by a double knock at the door, and she rang hastily to prevent any one being admitted. The servants, with contradictory orders, found it difficult to evade the earnest desire of the visitor to see their lady ; and at last they brought up a card, on which was written, " Miss

Derham wishes to be permitted to see Lady Lodore for Mrs. Villiers." *From* had first been written, erased, and *for* substituted. Lady Lodore was alarmed; and the ideas of danger and death instantly presenting themselves, she desired Miss Derham to be shown up. She met her with a face of anxiety, and with that frankness and kindness of manner which was the irresistible sceptre she wielded to subdue all hearts. Fanny had hitherto disliked Lady Lodore. She believed her to be cold, worldly, and selfish—now, in a moment, she was convinced, by the powerful influence of manner, that she was the contrary of all this; so that instead of the chilling address she meditated, she was impelled to throw off her reserve, and to tell her story with animation and detail. She spoke of what Mrs. Villiers had gone through previous to the arrest of her husband—and how constantly she had kept her resolve of remaining with him—though her situation day by day

becoming more critical, demanded attentions and luxuries which she had no means of attaining. “ Yet,” said Fanny, “ I should not have intruded on you even now, but that they cannot go on as they are ; their resources are utterly exhausted,—and until next June I see no prospect for them.”

“ Why does not Mr. Villiers apply to his father ? even if letters were of no avail, a personal appeal ——”

“ I am afraid that Colonel Villiers has nothing to give,” replied Fanny, “ and at all events, Mr. Villiers’s imprisonment ——”

“ Prison !” cried Lady Lodore, “ you do not mean—Ethel cannot be living in prison !”

“ They live within the rules, if you understand that term. They rent a lodging close to the prison on the other side of the river.”

“ This must indeed be altered,” said Lady Lodore, “ this is far too shocking—poor Ethel, she must come here ! Dear Miss Der-

ham, will you tell her how much I desire to see her, and entreat her to make my house her home."

Fanny shook head. "She will not leave her husband—I should make your proposal in vain."

Lady Lodore looked incredulous. After a moment's thought she persuaded herself that Ethel's having refused to return to the house of Mrs. Derham, or having negatived some other proposed kindness originated this notion, and she believed that she had only to make her invitation in the most gracious possible way, not to have it refused. "I will go to Ethel myself," she said; "I will myself bring her here, and so smooth all difficulties."

Fanny did not object. Under her new favourable opinion of Lady Lodore, she felt that all would be well if the mother and daughter were brought together, though only for a few minutes. She wrote down Ethel's address, and took her leave, while at the same moment Lady

Lodore ordered her carriage, and assured her that no time should be lost in removing Mrs. Villiers to a more suitable abode.

Lady Lodore's feelings on this occasion were not so smiling as her looks. She was grieved for her daughter, but she was exceedingly vexed for herself. She had desired some interest, some employment in life, but she recoiled from any that should link her with Ethel. She desired occupation, and not slavery ; but to bring the young wife to her own house, and make it a home for her, was at once destructive of her own independence. She looked forward with repugnance to the familiarity that must thence ensue between her and Villiers. Even the first step was full of annoyance, and she was displeased that Fanny had given her the task of going to her daughter's habitation, and forced her to appear personally on so degrading a scene ; there was however no help — she had undertaken it, and it must be done.

Every advance she made towards the wretch-

ed part of the town where Ethel lived, added to her ill-humour. She felt almost personally affronted by the necessity she was under of first coming in contact with her daughter under such disastrous circumstances. Her spleen against Lord Lodore revived : she viewed every evil that had ever befallen her, as arising from his machinations. If Ethel had been entrusted to her guardianship, she certainly had never become the wife of Edward Villiers—nor ever have tasted the dregs of opprobrious poverty.

At length, her carriage drew near a row of low, shabby houses ; and as the name caught her eye she found that she had reached her destination. She resolved not to see Villiers, if it could possibly be avoided ; and then making up her mind to perform her part with grace, and every show of kindness, she made an effort to smooth her brow and recall her smiles. The carriage stopped at a door—a servant-maid answered to the knock. She ordered Mr. Villiers to be asked for ; he was not

at home. One objection to her proceeding was removed by this answer. Mrs. Villiers was in the house, and she alighted and desired to be shown to her.

CHAPTER X.

As flowers beneath May's footsteps waken
As stars from night's loose hair are shaken ;
As waves arise when loud winds call,
Thoughts sprung where'er that step did fall.

SHELLEY.

NEVER before had the elegant and fastidious Lady Lodore entered such an abode, or ascended such stairs. The servant had told her to enter the room at the head of the first flight, so she made her way by herself, and knocked at the door. The voice that told her to come in, thrilled through her, she knew not why, and she became disturbed at finding that her self-possession was failing her. Slight things act powerfully on the subtle mechanism of the

human mind. She had dressed with scrupulous plainness, yet her silks and furs were strangely contrasted with the room she entered, and she felt ashamed of all the adjuncts of wealth and luxury that attended her. She opened the door with an effort: Ethel was seated near the fire at work—no place or circumstance could deteriorate from her appearance—in her simple, unadorned morning-dress, she looked as elegant and as distinguished as she had done when her mother had last seen her in diamonds and plumes in the presence of royalty. There was a charm about both, strikingly in contrast, and yet equal in fascination—the polish of Lady Lodore, and the simplicity of Ethel were both manifestations of inward grace and dignity; and as they now met, it would have been difficult to say which had the advantage of the other. Ethel's extreme youth, by adding to the interest with which she must be regarded, was in her favour. Yet full of sensibility and loveliness as was her face, she had never been,

nor was she even now, as strikingly beautiful as her mother.

Lady Lodore could not restrain the tear that started into her eye on beholding her daughter situated as she was. Ethel's feelings, on the contrary, were all gladness. She had no pride to allay her gratitude for her mother's kindness. "How very good of you to come!" she said, "how could you find out where we were?"

"How long have you been here?" asked Lady Lodore, looking round the wretched little room.

"Only a few weeks—I assure you it is not so bad as it seems. I should not much mind it, but that Edward feels it so deeply on my account."

"I do not wonder," said her mother, "he must be cut to the soul—but thank God it is over now. You shall come to me immediately, my house is quite large enough to accommodate you—I am come to fetch you."

“My own dearest mother!” — the words scarcely formed themselves on Ethel’s lips; she half feared to offend the lovely woman before her by showing her a daughter’s affection.

“Yes, call me mother,” said Lady Lodore; “I may, at last, I hope, be allowed to prove myself one. Come then, dear Ethel, you will not refuse my request—you will come with me?”

“How gladly—but—will they let Edward go? I thought there was no hope of so much good fortune.”

“I fear indeed,” replied her mother, “that Mr. Villiers must endure the annoyance of remaining here a little longer; but I hope his affairs will soon be arranged.”

Ethel bent her large eyes inquiringly on her mother, as if not understanding; and then, as her meaning opened on her, a smile diffused itself over her countenance as she said, “Your intentions are the kindest in the world—I am grateful, how far more grateful than I can at

all express, for your goodness. That you have had the kindness to come to this odious place is more than I could ever dare expect."

"It is not worth your thanks, although I think I deserve your acquiescence to my proposal. You will come home with me?"

Ethel shook her head, smilingly. "All my wishes are accomplished," she said, "through this kind visit. I would not have you for the world come here again; but the wall between us is broken down, and we shall not become strangers again."

"My dearest Ethel," said Lady Lodore, seriously, "I see what you mean. I wish Mr. Villiers were here to advocate my cause. You must come with me—he will be much more at ease when you are no longer forced to share his annoyances. This is in every way an unfit place for you, especially at this time."

"I shall appear ungrateful, I fear," replied Ethel, "if I assure you how much better off I am here than I could be any where else in the

world. This place appears miserable to you—so I dare say it is; to me it seems to possess every requisite for happiness, and were it not so, I would rather live in an actual dungeon with Edward, than in the most splendid mansion in England, away from him.”

Her face was lighted up with such radiance as she spoke—there was so much fervour in her voice—such deep affection in her speaking eyes—such an earnest demonstration of heart-felt sincerity, that Lady Lodore was confounded and overcome. Swift, as if a map had been unrolled before her, the picture of her own passed life was retraced in her mind—its loneliness and unmeaning pursuits—and the bitter disappointments that had blasted every hope of seeing better days. She burst into tears. Ethel was shocked and tried to soothe her by caresses and assurances of gratitude and affection. “And yet you will not come with me?” said Lady Lodore, making an effort to resume her self-command.

“ I cannot. It is impossible for me voluntarily to separate myself from Edward—I am too weak, too great a coward.”

“ And is there no hope of liberation for him ?” This question of Lady Lodore forced them back to matter-of-fact topics, and she became composed. Ethel related how ineffectual every endeavour had yet been to arrange his affairs, how large his debts, how inexorable his creditors, how neglectful his attorney.

“ And his father ?” inquired her mother.

“ He seems to me to be kind-hearted,” replied Ethel, “ and to feel deeply his son’s situation ; but he has no means—he himself is in want.”

“ He is keeping a carriage at this moment in Paris,” said Lady Lodore, “ and giving parties—however, I allow that that is no proof of his having money. Still you must not stay here.”

“ Nor shall we always,” replied Ethel ;

“something of course will happen to take us away, though as yet it is all hopeless enough.”

“Aunt Bessy, Mrs. Elizabeth Fitzhenry, might give you assistance. Have you asked her?—has she refused?”

“Edward has exacted a promise from me not to reveal our perplexities to her—he is punctilious about money obligations, and I have given my word not to hurt his delicacy on that point.”

“Then that, perhaps, is the reason why you refused my request to go home with me?” said Lady Lodore reproachfully.

“No,” replied Ethel, “I do not think that he is so scrupulous as to prevent a mother from serving her child, but he shall answer for himself; I expect him back from his walk every minute.”

“Then forgive me if I run away,” said Lady Lodore; “I am not fit to see him now. Better times will come, dearest Ethel, and we shall meet again. God bless you, my child, as

so much virtue and patience deserve to be blest. Remember me with kindness."

"Do not you forget me," replied Ethel, "or rather, do not think of me and my fortunes with too much disgust. We shall meet again, I hope?"

Lady Lodore kissed her, and hurried away. Scarcely was she in her carriage than she saw Villiers advancing: his prepossessing appearance, ingenuous countenance, and patrician figure, made more intelligible to her world-practised eyes the fond fidelity of his wife. She drew up the window that he might not see her, as she gave her directions for "home," and then retreating to the corner of her carriage, she tried to compose her thoughts, and to reflect calmly on what was to be done.

But the effort was vain. The further she was removed from the strange scene of the morning, the more powerfully did it act on, and agitate her mind. Her soul was in tumults. This was the being she had pitied,

almost despised ! Her eager imagination now exalted her into an angel. There was something heart-moving in the gentle patience, and unrepining contentment with which she bore her hard lot. She appeared in her eyes to be one of those rare examples sent upon earth to purify human nature, and to demonstrate how near akin to perfection we can become. Latent maternal pride might increase her admiration, and maternal tenderness add to its warmth. Her nature had acknowledged its affinity to her child, and she felt drawn towards her with inexpressible yearnings. A vehement desire to serve her sprung up—but all was confused and tumultuous. She pressed her hand on her forehead, as if so to restrain the strong current of thought. She compressed her lips, so to repress her tears.

Arrived at home, she found herself in prison within the walls of her chamber. She abhorred its gilding and luxury—she longed for Ethel's scant abode and glorious privations. To alleviate her restlessness, she again drove out, and

directed her course through the Regent's Park, and along the new road to Hampstead, where she was least liable to meet any one she knew. It was one of the first fine days of spring. The green meadows, the dark boughs swelling and bursting into bud, the fresh enlivening air, the holiday of nature's birth—all this was lost on her, or but added to her agitation. Still her thoughts were with her child in her narrow abode; every lovely object served but to recall her image, and the wafting of the soft breeze seemed an emanation from her. It was dark before she came back, and sent a hurried note of excuse to the house where she was to have dined. "No more, O never more," she cried, "will I so waste my being, but learn from Ethel to be happy, and to love."

Many thoughts and many schemes thronged her brain. Something must be done, or her heart would burst. Pride, affection, repentance, all occupied the same channel, and increased the flood that swept away every idea

but one. Her very love for Horatio, true and engrossing as it had been, the source of many tears and endless regrets, appeared as slight as the web of gossamer, compared to the chain that bound her to her daughter. She could not herself understand, nor did she wish to know, whence and why this enthusiasm had risen like an exhalation in her soul, covering and occupying its entire space. She only knew it was there, interpenetrating, paramount. Ethel's dark eyes and silken curls, her sweet voice and heavenly smile, formed a moving, speaking picture, which she felt that it were bliss to contemplate for ever. She retired at last to bed, but not to rest; and as she lay with open eyes, thinking not of sleep—alive in every pore—her brain working with ten thousand thoughts, one at last grew more importunate than the rest, and demanded all her attention. Her ideas became more consecutive, though not less rapid and imperious. She drew forth in prospect, as it were, a map of what was to be done, and the

results. Her mind became fixed, and sensations of ineffable pleasure accompanied her reveries. She was resolved to sacrifice every thing to her daughter—to liberate Villiers, and to establish her in ease and comfort. The image of self-sacrifice, and of the ruin of her own fortunes, was attended with a kind of rapture. She felt as if, in securing Ethel's happiness, she could never feel sorrow more. This was something worth living for: the burden of life was gone—its darkness dissipated—a soft light invested all things, and angels' voices invited her to proceed. While indulging in these reveries, she sunk into a balmy sleep—such a one she had not enjoyed for many months—nay, her whole past life had never afforded her so sweet a joy. The thoughts of love, when she believed that she should be united to Saville, were not so blissful; for self-approbation, derived from a consciousness of virtue and well-doing, hallowed every thought.

CHAPTER XI.

Like gentle rains on the dry plains,
 Making that green which late was grey;
Or like the sudden moon, that stains
 Some gloomy chamber's window panes,
With a broad light like day.

SHELLEY.

How mysterious a thing is the action of repentance in the human mind! We will not dive into the debasing secrets of remorse for guilt. Lady Lodore could accuse herself of none. Yet when she looked back, a new light shone on the tedious maze in which she had been lost; a light—and she blessed it—that showed her a pathway out of tempest and confusion into serenity and peace. She wondered at her pre-

vious blindness; it was as if she had closed her eyelids, and then fancied it was night. No fear that she should return to darkness; her heart felt so light, her spirit so clear and animated, that she could only wonder how it was she had missed happiness so long, when it needed only that she should stretch out her hand to take it.

Her first act on the morrow was to have an interview with her son-in-law's solicitor. Nothing could be more hopeless than Mr. Gayland's representation of his client's affairs. The various deeds of settlement and entail, through which he inherited his estate, were clogged in such a manner as to render an absolute sale of his reversionary prospects impossible, so that the raising of money on them could only be effected at an immense future sacrifice. Under these circumstances Gayland had been unwilling to proceed, and appeared lukewarm and dilatory, while he was impelled by that love for the preservation of property, which often finds place in the mind of a legal adviser.

Lady Lodore listened attentively to his statements. She asked the extent of Edward's debts, and somewhat started at the sum named as necessary to clear him. She then told Mr. Gayland that their ensuing conversation must continue under a pledge of secrecy on his part. He assented, and she proceeded to represent her intention of disposing of her jointure for the purpose of extricating Villiers from his embarrassments. She gave directions for its sale, and instructions for obtaining the necessary papers to effect it. Mr. Gayland's countenance brightened; yet he offered a few words of remonstrance against such unexampled generosity.

"The sacrifice," said Lady Lodore, "is not so great as you imagine. A variety of circumstances tend to compensate me for it. I do not depend upon this source of income alone; and be assured, that what I do, I consider, on the whole, as benefiting me even more than Mr. Villiers."

Mr. Gayland bowed; and Cornelia returned

home with a light heart. For months she had not felt such an exhilaration of spirits. A warm joy thrilled through her frame, and involuntary smiles dimpled her cheeks. Dusky and dingy as was the day, the sunshine of her soul dissipated its shadows, and spread brightness over her path. She could scarcely controul the expression of her delight; and when she sat down to write to Ethel, it was several minutes before she was able to collect her thoughts, so as to remember what she had intended to say. Two notes were destroyed before she had succeeded in imparting that sobriety to her expressions, which was needful to veil her purpose, which she had resolved to lock within her own breast for ever. At length she was obliged to satisfy herself with a few vague expressions. This was her letter:—

“ I cannot help believing, my dearest girl, that your trials are coming to a conclusion. I have seen Mr. Gayland; and it appears to me

that energy and activity are chiefly wanting for the arrangement of your husband's affairs: I think I have in some degree inspired these. He has promised to write to Mr. Villiers, who, I trust, will find satisfaction in his views. Do you, my dearest Ethel, keep up your spirits, and take care of your precious health. We shall meet again in better days, when you will be rewarded for your sufferings and goodness. Believe me, I love as much as I admire you ; so, in spite of the past, think of me with indulgence and affection."

Lady Lodore dressed to dine out, and for an evening assembly. She looked so radiant and so beautiful, that admiration and compliments were showered upon her. How vain and paltry they all seemed ; and yet her feelings were wholly changed from that period, when she desired to reject and scoff at the courtesy of her fellow-creatures. The bitterness of spirit was gone, which had prompted her to pour out gall

and sarcasm, and had made it her greatest pleasure to revel in the contempt and hate that filled her bosom towards herself and others. She was now at peace with the world, and disposed to view its follies charitably. Yet how immeasurably superior she felt herself to all those around her ! not through vanity or supercilious egotism, but from the natural spring of inward joy and self-approbation, which a consciousness of doing well opened in her before dried-up heart. She somewhat contemned her friends, and wholly pitied them. But she could not dwell on any disagreeable sentiment. Her thoughts, while she reverted to the circumstances that so changed their tenor, were stained with the fairest hues, harmonized by the most delicious music. She had risen to a sphere above, beyond the ordinary soarings of mortals—a world without a cloud, without one ungenial breath. She wondered at herself. She looked back with mingled horror and surprise on the miserable state of despondence to which she

had been reduced. Where were now her regrets?—where her ennui, her repinings, her despair? “In the deep bosom of the ocean buried!”—and she arose, as from a second birth, to new hopes, new prospects, new feelings; or rather to another state of being, which had no affinity to the former. For poverty was now her pursuit, obscurity her desire, ruin her hope; and she smiled on, and beckoned to these, as if life possessed no greater blessings.

Her impetuosity and pride served to sustain the high tone of her soul. She had none of that sloth of purpose, or weakness of feeling, that leads to hesitation and regret. To resolve with her had been, during the whole course of her life, to do; and what her mind was set upon she accomplished—it might be rashly, but still with that independence and energy, that gave dignity even to her more ambiguous actions. As before, when she cast off Lodore, she had never admitted a doubt that she was justified before God and her conscience for refusing to submit to the

most insulting tyranny ; so now, believing that she had acted ill in not demanding the guardianship of her daughter, and resolving to atone for the evils which were the consequence of this neglect of duty on her part, she had no misgivings as to the future, but rushed precipitately onwards. As a racer at the Olympic games, she panted to arrive at the goal, though it were only to expire at the moment of its attainment.

Meanwhile, Ethel had been enchanted by her mother's visit, and spoke of it to Villiers as a proof of the real goodness of her heart, insisting that she was judged harshly and falsely. Villiers smiled incredulously. "She gains your esteem at an easy rate," he observed ; "cultivate it, if it makes you happier. It will need more than a mere act of ordinary courtesy—more than a slight invitation to her house, to persuade me that Lady Lodore is not—what she is—a worshipper of the world, a frivolous, unfeeling woman. Mark me whether she comes again."

Her letter, on the following day, strengthened his opinion. "This is even insulting," he said: "she takes care to inform you that she will not look again on your poverty, but will wait for *better days* to bring you together. The kindness of such an intimation is quite admirable. She has inspired Gayland with energy and activity!—O, then, she must be a Medea, in more senses than the more obvious one."

Ethel looked reproachfully. She saw that Villiers was deeply hurt that Lady Lodore had become acquainted with their distresses, and been a witness of the nakedness of the land. She could not inspire him with the tenderness that warmed her heart towards her mother, and the conviction she entertained, in spite of appearances, (for she was forced to confess to herself that Lady Lodore's letter was not exactly the one she expected,) that her heart was generous and affectionate. It was a comfort to her that Fanny Derham participated in her opinions. Fanny was quite sure that Lady Lodore

would prove herself worthy of the esteem she had so suddenly conceived for her ; and Ethel listened delightedly to her assertions—it was so soothing to think well of, to love, and praise her mother.

The solicitor's letter, which came, as Lady Lodore announced, somewhat surprised Villiers ; yet, after a little reflection, he gave no heed to its contents. It said, that upon further consideration of particular points, Gayland perceived certain facilities ; by improving upon which, he hoped soon to make a favourable arrangement, and to extricate Mr. Villiers from his involvements. Any thing so vague demanded explanation. Edward wrote earnestly, requesting one ; but his letter remained unanswered. Perplexed and annoyed, he obtained permission to quit his bounds for a few hours, and called upon the man of law. Gayland was so busy, that he could not afford him more than five minutes' conversation. He said that he had hopes—even expectations ; that a little time would show more ; and he begged his client to

be patient. Villiers returned in despair. The only circumstance that at all served to inspire him with any hope, was, that on the day succeeding to his visit, he received a remittance of an hundred pounds from Gayland, who begged to be considered as his banker till the present negociations should be concluded.

There was some humiliation in the knowledge of how welcome this supply had become, and Ethel used her gentle influence to mitigate the pain of such reflections. If she ever drooped, it was not for herself, but for Villiers; and she carefully hid even these disinterested repinings. Her own condition did not inspire her with any fears, and the anxiety that she experienced for her unborn child was untinged by bitterness or despair. She felt assured that their present misfortunes would be of short duration; and instead of letting her thoughts dwell on the mortifications or shame that marked the passing hour, she loved to fill her mind with pleasing sensations, inspired by the tenderness of her

husband, the kindness of poor Fanny, and the reliance she had in the reality of her mother's affection. In vain, she said, did the harsher elements of life try to disturb the serenity which the love of those around her produced in her soul. Her happiness was treasured in their hearts, and did not emanate from the furniture of a room, nor the comfort of an equipage. Her babe, if destined to open its eyes first on such a scene, would be still less acted upon by its apparent cheerlessness. Cradled in her arms, and nourished at her bosom, what more benign fate could await the little stranger? What was there in their destiny worthy of grief, while they remained true to each other?

With such arguments she tried to inspire Villiers with a portion of that fortitude and patience which was a natural growth in herself. They had but slender effect upon him. Their different educations had made her greatly his superior in these virtues; besides that she, with her simpler habits and unprejudiced mind, was

less shocked by the concomitants of penury, than he, bred in high notions of aristocratic exclusiveness. She had spent her youth among settlers in a new country, and did not associate the idea of disgrace with want. Nakedness and gaunt hunger had often been the invaders of her forest home, scarcely to be repelled by her father's forethought and resources. How could she deem these shameful, when they had often assailed the most worthy and industrious, who were not the less regarded or esteemed on that account. She had acquired a practical philosophy, while inhabiting the western wilderness, and beholding the vast variety of life that it presents, which stood her in good stead under her European vicissitudes. The white inhabitants of America did not form her only school. The Red Indian and his squaw were also human beings, subject to the same necessities, moved, in the first instance, by the same impulses as herself. All that bore the human form were sanctified to her by the spirit of sympathy ; and she could not,

as Edward did, feel herself wholly outcast and under ban, while kindness, however humble, and intelligence, however lowly, attended upon her.

Villiers could not yield to her arguments, nor partake her wisdom ; yet he was glad that she possessed any source of consolation, however unimaginable by himself. He buried within his heart the haughty sense of wrong. He uttered no complaint, though his whole being rebelled against the state of inaction to which he was reduced. It maddened him to feel that he could not stir a finger to help himself, even while he fancied that he saw his young wife withering before his eyes ; and looked forward to the birth of his child, under circumstances, that rendered even the necessary attendance difficult, if not impracticable. The heaviest weight of slavery fell upon him, for it was he that was imprisoned, and forbidden to go beyond certain limits ; and though Ethel religiously confined herself within yet narrower bounds than those allotted to him, he only saw, in this delicacy,

another source of evil. Nor were these real tangible ills those which inflicted the greatest pain. Had these misfortunes visited him in the American wilderness, or in any part of the world where the majesty of nature had surrounded them, he fancied that he should have been less alive to their sinister influence. But here shame was conjoined with the perpetual spectacle of the least reputable class of the civilized community. Their walks were haunted by men who bore the stamp of profligacy and crime; and the very shelter of their dwelling was shared by the mean and vulgar. His aristocratic pride was sorely wounded at every turn;—not for himself so much, for he was manly enough to feel “that a man’s a man for all that,”—but for Ethel’s sake, whom he would have fondly placed apart from all that is deformed and unseemly, guarded even from the rougher airs of heaven, and surrounded by every thing most luxurious and beautiful in the world.

There was no help. Now and then he got

a letter from his father, full of unmeaning apologies and unmanly complaints. The more irretrievable his poverty became, the firmer grew his resolve not to burden with his wants any more distant relation. He would readily give up every prospect of future wealth to purchase ease and comfort for Ethel ; but he could not bend to any unworthy act ; and the harder he felt pressed upon and injured by fortune, the more jealously he maintained his independence of feeling ; on that he would lean to the last, though it proved a sword to pierce him.

He looked forward with despair, yet he tried to conceal his worst thoughts, which would still be brooding upon absolute want and starvation. He answered Ethel's cheering tones in accents of like cheer, and met the melting tenderness of her gaze with eyes that spoke of love only. He endeavoured to persuade her that he did not wholly shut his heart from the hopes she was continually presenting to him. Hopes, the very names of which were mockery.

For they must necessarily be embodied in words and ideas—and his father or uncle were mentioned—the one had proved a curse, the other a temptation. He could trace his reverses as much to the habits of expense, and the false views of his resources, acquired under Lord Maristow's tutelage, as to the prodigality and neglect of his parent. Even the name of Horatio Saville produced bitterness. Why was he not here? He would not intrude his wants upon him in his Italian home; but had he been in England, they had been saved from these worst blows of fate.

The only luxury of Villiers was to steal some few hours of solitude, when he could indulge in his miserable reflections without restraint. The loveliness and love of Ethel were then before his imagination to drive him to despair. To suffer alone would have been nothing; but to see this child of beauty and tenderness, this fairest nursling of nature and liberty, droop and fade in their narrow, poverty-stricken home, bred

thoughts akin to madness. During each live-long night he was kept waking by the anguish of such reflections. Darker thoughts sometimes intruded themselves. He fancied that if he were dead, Ethel would be happier. Her mother, his relations, each and all would come forward to gift her with opulence and ease. The idea of self-destruction thus became soothing; and he pondered with a kind of savage pleasure on the means by which he should end the coil of misery that had wound round him.

At such times the knowledge of Ethel's devoted affection checked him. Or sometimes, as he gazed on her as she lay sleeping at his side, he felt that every sorrow was less than that which separation must produce; and that to share adversity with her was greater happiness than the enjoyment of prosperity apart from her. Once, when brought back from the gloomiest desperation by such a return of softer emotions, the words of Francesca da Rimini rushed upon his mind and completed the change. He recollected

how she and her lover were consoled by their eternal companionship in the midst of the infernal whirlwind. “And do I love you less, my angel?” he thought; “are you not more dear to me than woman ever was to man, and would I divide myself from you because we suffer? Perish the thought! Whether for good or ill, let our existences still continue one, and from the sanctity and sympathy of our union, a sweet will be extracted, sufficient to destroy the bitterness of this hour. We prefer remaining together, mine own sweet love, for ever together, though it were for an eternity of pain. And these woes are finite. Your pure and exalted nature will be rewarded for its sufferings, and I, for your sake, shall be saved. I could not live without you in this world; and yet with insane purpose I would rush into the unknown, away from you, leaving you to seek comfort and support from other hands than mine. I was base and cowardly to entertain the thought, but for one moment—a traitor to my own affection, and the

stabber of your peace. Ah, dearest Ethel, when in a few hours your eyes will open on the light, and seek me as the object most beloved by them, were I away, unable to return their fondness, incapable of the blessing of beholding them, what hell could be contrived to punish more severely my dereliction of duty?"

With this last thought another train of feeling was introduced, and he strung himself to more manly endurance. He saw that his post was assigned him in this world, and that he ought to fulfil its duties with courage and patience. Hope came hand in hand with such ideas—and the dawn of content on his soul was a proof that the exercise of virtue brought with it its own reward. He could not always keep his feelings in the same tone, but he no longer saw greatness of mind in the indulgence of sorrow.

He remembered that throughout the various stations into which society has divided human beings, adversity and pain belong to each, and

that death and treachery are more frightful evils than all the hardships of life. He thought of his unborn child, and of his duties towards it—not only in a worldly point of view, but as its teacher and guide in morals and religion. The beauty and use of the ties of blood, to which his peculiar situation had hitherto blinded him, became intelligible at once to his heart and his understanding; and while he felt how ill his father had fulfilled the paternal duties, he resolved that his own offspring should never have cause to reproach him for similar misconduct. Before he had repined because the evils of his lot seemed gratuitous suffering; but now he felt, as Ethel had often expressed it, that the sting of humiliation is taken from misfortune, when we nerve ourselves to endure it for another's sake.

CHAPTER XII.

The world had just begun to steal
Each hope that led me lightly on,
I felt not as I used to feel,
And life grew dark and love was gone.

THOMAS MOORE.

WHILE the young pair were thus struggling with the severe visitation of adversity, Lady Lodore was earnestly engaged in her endeavours to extricate them from their difficulties. The ardour of her zeal had made her take the first steps in this undertaking, with a resolution that would not look behind, and a courage not to be dismayed by the dreary prospect which the future afforded. The scheme which she had planned, and was now proceeding to

execute, was unbounded in generosity and self-sacrifice. It was not in her nature to stop short at half-measures, nor to pause when once she had fixed her purpose. If she ever trembled on looking forward to the utter ruin she was about to encounter, her second emotion was to despise herself for such pusillanimity, and to be roused to renewed energy. She intended to devote as much as was necessary of the money arising from the sale of her jointure, as fixed by her marriage settlement, for the liquidation of her son-in-law's debts. The remaining six hundred a-year, bequeathed to her in Lord Lodore's will, under circumstances of cruel insult, she resolved to give up to her daughter's use, for her future subsistence. She hoped to save enough from the sum produced by the disposal of her jointure, to procure the necessities of life for a few years, and she did not look beyond. She would quit London for ever. She must leave her house, which she had bought during her days of prosperity, and

which she had felt so much pride and delight in adorning with every luxury and comfort : to crown her good work, she intended to give it up to Ethel. And then with her scant means she would take refuge in the solitude where Lodore found her, and spend the residue of her days among the uncouth and lonely mountains of Wales, in poverty and seclusion. It was from no agreeable association with her early youth, that she selected the neighbourhood of Rhaider Gowy for her future residence ; nor from a desire of renewing the recollections of the period spent there, nor of revisiting the scenes, where she had stepped beyond infancy into the paths of life. Her choice simply arose from being obliged to think of economy in its strictest sense, and she remembered this place as the cheapest in the world, and the most retired. Besides, that in fixing on a part of the country which she had before inhabited, and yet where she would be utterly unknown, the idea of her future home assumed distinctness, and a greater

sense of practicability was imparted to her schemes, than could have been the case, had she been unable to form any image in her mind of the exact spot whither she was about to betake herself.

The first conception of this plan had dawned on her soul, as the design of some sublime poem or magnificent work of art may present itself to the contemplation of the poet and man of genius. She dwelt on it in its entire result, with a glow of joy; she entered into its details with childish eagerness. She pictured to herself the satisfaction of Villiers and Ethel at finding themselves suddenly, as by magic, restored to freedom and the pleasures of life. She figured their gladness in exchanging their miserable lodging for the luxury of her elegant dwelling; their pleasure in forgetting the long train of previous misfortunes, or remembering them only to enhance their prosperity, when pain and fear, disgrace and shame, should be exchanged for security and comfort. She repeated to herself,

“ I do all this—I, the despised Cornelia! I who was deemed unworthy to have the guardianship of my own child. I, who was sentenced to desertion and misery, because I was too worldly and selfish to be worthy of Horace Saville! How little through life has my genuine character been known, or its qualities appreciated! Nor will it be better understood now. My sacrifices will continue a mystery, and even the benefits I am forced to acknowledge to flow from me, I shall diminish in their eyes, by bestowing them with apparent indifference. Will they ever deign to discover the reality under the deceitful appearances which it will be my pride to exhibit? I care not; conscience will approve me—and when I am alone and unthought of, the knowledge that Ethel is happy through my means will make poverty a blessing.”

It was not pride alone that induced Lady Lodore to resolve on concealing the extent of her benefits. All that she could give was not

much if compared with the fortunes of the wealthy—but it was a competence, which would enable her daughter and her husband to expect better days with patience; but if they knew how greatly she was a sufferer for their good, they would insist at least upon her sharing their income—and what was scanty in its entirety, would be wholly insufficient when divided. Villiers also might dispute or reject her kindness, and deeply injured as she believed herself to have been by him—injured by his disesteem, and the influence he had used over Saville, in a manner so baneful to her happiness, she felt irrepressible exultation at the idea of heaping obligation on him,—and knowing herself to be deserving of his deepest gratitude. All these sentiments might be deemed fantastic, or at least extravagant. Yet her conclusions were reasonable, for it was perfectly true that Villiers would rather have returned to his prison, than have purchased freedom at the vast price she was about to pay for it. No, her design

was faultless in its completeness, meagre and profitless if she stopt short of its full execution. Nor would she see Ethel again in the interim—partly fearful of not preserving her secret inviolate—partly because she felt so strongly drawn towards her, that she dreaded finding herself the slave of an affection—a passion, which, under her circumstances, she could not indulge. Without counsellor, without one friendly voice to encourage, she advanced in the path she had marked out, and drew from her own heart only the courage to proceed.

It required, however, all her force of character to carry her forward. A thousand difficulties were born at every minute, and the demands made were increased to such an extent as to make it possible that they would go beyond her means of satisfying them. She had not the assistance of one friend acquainted with the real state of things to direct her—her only adviser was a man of law, who did what he was directed—not indeed with passive obedience, but whose

deviations from mere acquiescence, arose from technical objections and legal difficulties, at once unintelligible and tormenting.

Besides these more palpable annoyances, other clouds arose, natural to wavering humanity, which would sometimes shadow Cornelia's soul, so that she drooped from the height she had reached, with a timid and dejected spirit. At first she looked forward to ruin, exile, and privation, as to possessions which she coveted—but the further she proceeded, the more she lost view of the light and gladness which had attended on the dawn of her new visions. Futurity became enveloped in an appalling obscurity, while the present was sad and cheerless. The ties which she had formed in the world, which she had fancied it would be so easy to cut asunder, assumed strength; and she felt that she must endure many pangs in the act of renouncing them for ever. The scenes and persons which, a little while ago, she had regarded as uninteresting and frivolous—she was now

forced to acknowledge to be too inextricably interwoven with her habits and pursuits, to be all at once quitted without severe pain. When the future was spoken of by others with joyous anticipation, her heart sunk within her, to think how her hereafter was to become disjointed and cast away from all that had preceded it. The mere pleasures of society grew into delights, when thought of as about to become unattainable; and slight partialities were regarded as if founded upon strong friendship and tender affection. She was not aware till now how habit and association will endear the otherwise indifferent, and how the human heart, prone to love, will entwine its ever-sprouting tendrils around any object, not absolutely repulsive, which is brought into near contact with it. When any of her favourites addressed her in cordial tones, when she met the glance of one she esteemed, directed towards her with an expression of kindness and sympathy, her eyes grew dim, and a thrill of anguish passed through

her frame. All that she had a little while ago scorned as false and empty, she now looked upon as the pleasant reality of life, which she was to exchange for she scarcely knew what—a living grave, a friendless desert—for silence and despair.

It is a hard trial at all times to begin the world anew, even when we exchange a mediocre station for one which our imagination paints as full of enjoyment and distinction. How much more difficult it was for Lady Lodore to despoil herself of every good, and voluntarily to encounter poverty in its most unadorned guise. As time advanced, she became fully aware of what she would have to go through, and her heroism was the greater, because, though the charm had vanished, and no hope of compensation or reward was held out, she did not shrink from accomplishing her task. She could not exactly say, like old Adam in the play,

At seventeen years many their fortunes seek,
But at fourscore it is too late a week.

Yet at her age it was perhaps more difficult to cast off the goods of this world, than at a more advanced one. Midway in life, we are not weaned from affections and pleasures—we still hope. We even demand more of solid advantages, because the romantic ideas of youth have disappeared, and yet we are not content to give up the game. We no longer set our hearts on ephemeral joys, but require to be enabled to put our trust in the continuance of any good offered to our choice. This desire of durability in our pleasures is equally felt by the young; but ardour of feeling and ductility of imagination is then at hand to bestow a quality, so dear and so unattainable to fragile humanity, on any object we desire should be so gifted. But at a riper age we pause, and seek that our reason may be convinced, and frequently prefer a state of prosperity less extatic and elevated, because its very sobriety satisfies us that it will not slip suddenly from our grasp.

The comforts of life, the esteem of friends—

these are things which we then regard with the greatest satisfaction ; and other feelings, less reasonable, yet not less keenly felt, may enter into the circle of sensations, which forms the existence of a beautiful woman. It is less easy for one who has been all her life admired and waited upon, to give up the few last years of such power, than it would have been to cast away the gift in earlier life. She has learned to doubt her influence, to know its value, and to prize it. In girlhood it may be matter of mere triumph—in after years it will be looked on as an inestimable quality by which she may more easily and firmly secure the benevolence of her fellow-creatures. All this depends upon the polish of the skin and the fire of the eye, which a few years will deface and quench—and while the opprobrious epithet of old woman approaches within view, she is glad to feel secure from its being applied to her, by perceiving the signs of the influence of her surviving attractions marked in the coun-

tenances of her admirers. Lady Lodore never felt so kindly inclined towards hers, as now that she was about to withdraw from them. Their admiration, for its own sake, she might contemn, but she valued it as the testimony that those charms were still hers, which once had subdued the soul of him she loved—and this was no disagreeable assurance to one who was on the eve of becoming a grandmother.

Her sensibility, awakened by the considerations forced on her by her new circumstances, caused her to make more progress in the knowledge of life, and in the philosophy of its laws, than love or ambition had ever done before. The last had rendered her proud from success, the first had caused her to feel dependent on one only ; but now that she was about to abandon all, she found herself bound to all by stronger ties than she could have imagined. She became aware that any new connexion could never be adorned by the endearing recollections attending those she had already formed. The

friends of her youth, her mere acquaintances, she regarded with peculiar partiality, as being the witnesses or sharers of her past joys and successes. Each familiar face was sanctified in her eyes by association; and she walked among those whom she had so lately scorned, as if they were saintly memorials to be approached with awe, and quitted with eternal regret. Her hopes and prospects had hinged upon them, but her life became out of joint when she quitted them. Her sensitive nature melted in unwonted tenderness while occupied by such contemplations, and they turned the path, she had so lately entered as one of triumph and gladness, to gloom and despondence.

Sometimes she pondered upon means for preserving her connexion with the world. But any scheme of that kind was fraught, on the one hand, with mortification to herself, on the other, with the overthrow of her designs, through the repugnance which Ethel and her husband would feel at occasioning such unmea-

sured sacrifices. She often regretted that there were no convents, to which she might retire with safety and dignity. Conduct, such as she contemplated pursuing, would, under the old regime in France, have been recompensed by praise and gratitude ; while its irrevocability must prevent any resistance to her wishes. In giving up fortune and station, she would have placed herself under the guardianship of a community ; and have found protection and security, to compensate for poverty and slavery. The very reverse of all this must now happen. Alone, friendless, unknown, and therefore despised, she must shift for herself, and rely on her own resources for prudence to insure safety, and courage to endure the evils of her lot. To one of another sex, the name of loneliness can never convey the idea of desolation and disregard, which gives it so painful a meaning in a woman's mind. They have not been taught always to look up to others, and to do nothing for themselves ; so that business be-

comes a matter of heroism to a woman, when conducted in the most common-place way ; but when it is accompanied by mystery, she feels herself transported from her fitting place, and as if about to encounter shame and contumely. Lady Lodore had never been conversant with any mode of life, except that of being waited on and watched over. In the poverty of her early girlhood, her mother had been constantly at her side. The necessity of so conducting herself as to prevent the shadow of slander from visiting her, had continued this state of dependence during all her married life. She had never stepped across a street without attendance ; nor put on her gloves, but as brought to her by a servant. Her look had commanded obedience, and her will had been law with those about her. This was now to be altered. She scarcely reverted in her mind to these minutiae ; and when she did, it was to smile at herself for being able to give weight to such trifles. She was not aware how, hereafter, these small things would

become the shapings and embodyings which desertion and penury would adopt, to sting her most severely. The new course she was about to enter, was too unknown to make her fears distinct. There was one vast blank before her, one gigantic and mishapen image of desertion, which filled her mind to the exclusion of every other, but whose parts were not made out, though this very indistinctness was the thing that often chiefly appalled her.

She said, with the noble exile,*—

“ I am too old to fawn upon a nurse,
Too far in years to be a pupil now.”

It is true that she had not, like him, to lament that—

“ My native English, now I must forego ;”

but there is another language, even more natural than the mere dialect in which we have been educated. When our lips no longer utter

* Richard II.

the sentiments of our heart—when we are forced to exchange the spontaneous effusions of the soul for cramped and guarded phrases, which give no indication of the thought within,—then, indeed, may we say, that our tongue becomes

. “an unstrung viol, or a harp,
. put into his hands,
That knows no touch to tune the harmony.”

And this was to be Lady Lodore's position. Her only companions would be villagers; or, at best, a few Welsh gentry, with whom she could have no real communication. Sympathy, the charm of life, was dead for her, and her state of banishment would be far more complete than if mountains and seas only constituted its barriers.

Lady Lodore was often disturbed by these reflections, but she did not on that account waver in her purpose. The flesh might shrink, but the spirit was firm. Sometimes, indeed, she wondered how it was that she had first conceived

the design, which had become the tyrant of her life. She had long known that she had a daughter, young, lovely, and interesting, without any great desire to become intimate with her. Sometimes pride, sometimes indignation, had checked her maternal feelings. The only time before, in which she had felt any emotion similar to that which now governed her, was on the day when she had spoken to her in the House of Lords. But instead of indulging it, she had fled from it as an enemy, and despised herself as a dupe, for being for one instant its subject. When her fingers then touched her daughter's cheek, she had not trembled like Ethel; yet an awful sensation passed through her frame, which for a moment stunned her, and she hastily retreated, to recover herself. Now, on the contrary, she longed to strain her child to her heart; she thought no sacrifice too great, which was to conduce to her advantage; and that she condemned herself never to see her more, appeared the hardest part of the lot she

was to undergo. Why was this change? She could not tell—memory could not inform her. She only knew that since she had seen Ethel in her adversity, the stoniness of her heart had dissolved within her, that her whole being was subdued to tenderness, and that the world was changed from what it had been in her eyes. She felt that she could not endure life, unless for the sake of benefiting her child; and that this sentiment mastered her in spite of herself, so that every struggle with it was utterly vain.

Thus if she sometimes repined at the hard fate that drove her into exile, yet she never wavered in her intentions; and in the midst of regret, a kind of exultation was born, which calmed her pain. Smiles sat upon her features, and her voice was attuned to cheerfulness. The new-sprung tenderness of her soul imparted a fascination to her manner far more irresistible than that to which tact and polish had given rise. She was more kind and affectionate, and, above all, more sincere, and therefore more winning.

Every one felt, though none could divine the cause of, this change. It was remarked that she was improved : some shrewdly suspected that she was in love. And so she was—with an object more enchanting than any earthly lover. For the first time she knew and loved the Spirit of good and beauty, an affinity to which affords the greatest bliss that our nature can receive.

CHAPTER XIII.

It is the same, for be it joy or sorrow,
The path of its departure still is free ;
Man's yesterday can ne'er be like his morrow,
Nor aught endure save mutability.

SHELLEY.

THE month of June had commenced. In spite of lawyer's delays and the difficulties attendant on all such negotiations, they were at last concluded, and nothing remained but for Lady Lodore to sign the paper which was to consign her to comparative destitution. In all changes we feel most keenly the operation of small circumstances, and are chiefly depressed by the necessity of stooping to the direction of petty arrange-

ments, and having to deal with subordinate persons. To complete her design, Lady Lodore had to make many arrangements, trivial yet imperative, which called for her attention, when she was least fitted to give it. She had met these demands on her patience without shrinking ; and all was prepared for the finishing stroke about to be put to her plans. She dismissed those servants whom she did not intend to leave in the house for Ethel's use. She contrived to hasten the intended marriage of her own maid, so to disburthen herself wholly. The mode by which she was, solitary and unknown, to reach the mountains of Wales, without creating suspicion, or leaving room for conjecture, was no easy matter. In human life, one act is born of another, so that any one that disjoins itself from the rest, instantly gives rise to curiosity and inquiry. Lady Lodore, though fertile in expedients, was almost foiled : the eligibility of having one confidant pressed itself upon her. She thought of Fanny Derham ; but her ex-

treme youth, and her intimacy with Mrs. Villiers, which would have necessitated many falsehoods, so to preserve the secret, deterred her : she determined at last to trust to herself alone. She resolved to take with her one servant only, who had not been long in her service, and to dismiss him immediately after leaving London. Difficulties presented themselves on every side ; but she believed that they could be best surmounted by obviating them in succession as they arose, and that any fixed artificial plan would only tend to embarrass, while a simple mode of proceeding would continue unquestioned.

Her chief art consisted in not appearing to be making any change at all. She talked of a visit of two or three months to Emms, and mentioned her intention of lending her house, during the interval, to her daughter. She thus secured to herself a certain period during which no curiosity would be excited ; and after a month or two had passed away, she would be

utterly forgotten:—thus she reasoned; and whether it were a real tomb that she entered, or the living grave which she anticipated, her name and memory would equally vanish from the earth, and she be thought of no more. If Ethel ever entertained a wish to see her, Villiers would be at hand to check and divert it. Who else was there to spend a thought upon her? Alone upon earth, no friendly eye, solicitous for her welfare, would seek to penetrate the mystery in which she was about to envelope herself.

The day came, it was the second of June, when every preliminary was accomplished. She had signed away all that she possessed—she had done it with a smile—and her voice was unfaltering. The sum which she had saved for herself consisted of but a few hundred pounds, on which she was to subsist for the future. Again she enforced his pledge of secrecy on Mr. Gayland; and glad that all was over, yet heavy at heart in spite of her gladness, she returned to

her home, which in a few hours she was to quit for ever.

During all this time, her thoughts had seldom reverted to Saville. Hope was dead, and the regrets of love had vanished with it. That he would approve her conduct, was an idea that now and then flashed across her mind ; but he would remain in eternal ignorance, and therefore it could not bring their thoughts into any communion. Whether he came to England, or remained at Naples, availed her nothing. No circumstance could add to, or diminish, the insuperable barrier which his marriage placed between them.

She returned home from her last interview with Mr. Gayland : it was four o'clock in the day ; at six she had appointed Fanny Derham to call on her ; and an hour afterwards, the horses were ordered to be at the door, which were to convey her away.

She became strangely agitated. She took

herself to task for her weakness; but every moment disturbed yet more the calm she was so anxious to attain. She walked through the rooms of the house she had dwelt in for so many years. She looked on the scene presented from her windows. The drive in Hyde Park was beginning to fill with carriages and equestrians, to be thronged with her friends whom she was never again to see. Deep sadness crept over her mind. Her uncontrollable thoughts, by some association of ideas, which she could not disentangle—brought before her the image of Lodore, with more vividness than it had possessed for years. A kind of wish to cross the Atlantic, and to visit the scenes where he had dwelt so long, arose within her; and then again she felt a desire to visit Longfield, and to view the spot in which his mortal remains were laid. As her imagination pictured the grave of the husband of her youth, whom she had abandoned and forgotten, tears streamed from her eyes—the first she had shed, even in idea, beside it. “It

is not to atone—for surely I was not guilty towards him”—such were Lady Lodore’s reflections,—“yet, methinks, in this crisis of my fate, when about to imitate his abrupt and miserable act of self-banishment, my heart yearns for some communication with him; and it seems to me as if, approaching his cold, silent dust, he would hear me if I said, ‘Be at peace! your child is happy through my means!’”

Again her reveries were attended by a gush of tears. “How strange a fate is mine, ever to be abandoned by, or to abandon, those towards whom I am naturally drawn into near contact. Fifteen years are flown since I parted from Lodore for ever! Then by inspiring one so high-minded, so richly gifted, as Saville, with love for me, fortune appeared ready to compensate for my previous sufferings; but the curse again operated, and I shall never see him more. Yet do I not forget thee, Saville, nor thy love!—nor can it be a crime to think of the past, which is as irretrievable as if the grave had closed over

it. Through Saville it has been that I have not lived quite in vain—that I have known what love is ; and might have even tasted of happiness, but for the poison which perpetually mingles with my cup. I never wish to see him more ; but if I earnestly desire to visit Lodore's grave, how gladly would I make a far longer pilgrimage to see Saville's child, and to devote myself to one who owes its existence to him. Wretched Cornelia ! what thoughts are these ? Is it now, that you are a beggar and an outcast, that you first encourage unattainable desires ?”

Still as she looked round, and remembered how often Saville had been beside her in that room, thoughts and regrets thronged faster and more thickly on her. She recollected the haughty self-will and capricious coquetry which had caused the destruction of her dearest hopes. She took down a miniature of herself, which her lover had so fruitlessly besought her to give him. It was on the belief that she had bestowed this picture

on a rival that he had so suddenly come to the determination of quitting England. It seemed now in its smiles and youth to reproach her for having wasted both; and the sight of it agitated her bosom, and produced a tumult of regret and despair at his loss—till she threw it from her, as too dearly associated with one she must forget. And yet wherefore forget?—he had forgotten; but as a dead wife might in her grave, love her husband, though wedded to another, so might the lost, buried Cornelia remember him, though the husband of Clorinda. Self-compassion now moved her to tears, and she wept plentiful showers, which rather exhausted than relieved her.

With a strong effort she recalled her sense of what was actually going on, and struggling resolutely to calm herself, she sat down and began a letter to her daughter, which was necessary, as some sort of explanation, at once to allay wonder and baffle curiosity. Thus she wrote:

“ DEAREST ETHEL,

“ My hopes have not been deceived. Mr. Gayland has at last contrived means for the liberation of your husband; and to-morrow morning you will leave that shocking place. Perhaps I receive more pleasure from this piece of good fortune than you, for your sense of duty and sweet disposition so gild the vilest objects, that you live in a world of your own, as beautiful as yourself, and the accident of situation is immaterial to you.

“ It is not enough, however, that you should be free. I hope that the punctilious delicacy of Mr. Villiers will not cause you to reject the benefits of a mother. In this instance there is more of justice than generosity in my offer; and it may therefore be accepted without the smallest hesitation. My jointure ought to satisfy me, and the additional six hundred a year—which I may call the price of blood, since I bought it at the sacrifice of the dearest

ties and duties,—is most freely at your service. It will delight me to get rid of it, as much as if thus I threw off the consciousness of a crime. It is yours by every law of equity, and will be hereafter paid into your banker's hands. Do not thank me, my dear child—be happy, that will be my best reward. Be happy, be prudent—this sum will not make you rich; and the only acknowledgment I ask of you is, that you make it suffice, and avoid debt and embarrassment.

“ By singular coincidence I am imperatively obliged to leave England at this moment. The horses are ordered to be here in half an hour—I am obliged therefore to forego the pleasure of seeing you until my return. Will you forgive me this apparent neglect, which is the result of necessity, and favour me by coming to my house to-morrow, on leaving your present abode, and making it your home until my return? Miss Derham has promised to call here this afternoon; I shall see her before I go, and through

her you will learn how much you will make me your debtor by accepting my offers, and permitting me to be of some slight use to you.

“ Excuse the brevity and insufficiency of this letter, written at the moment of departure.— You will hear from me again, when I am able to send you my address, and I shall hope to have a letter from you. Meanwhile Heaven bless you, my angelic Ethel ! Love your mother, and never, in spite of every thing, permit unkind thoughts of her to harbour in your mind. Make Mr. Villiers think as well of me as he can, and believe me that your welfare will always be the dearest wish of my heart. Adieu.

“ Ever affectionately yours,

“ C. LODORÉ.”

She folded and sealed this letter, and at the same moment there was a knock at the door of her house, which she knew announced the arrival of Fanny Derham. She was still much agitated, and trying to calm herself, she took

up a newspaper, and cast her eyes down the columns; so, by one of the most common place of the actions of our life, to surmount the painful intensity of her thoughts. She read mechanically one or two paragraphs—she saw the announcements of births, marriages, and deaths. “My moral death will not be recorded here,” she thought, “and yet, I shall be more dead than any of these.” The thought in her mind remained as it were truncated; her eye was arrested—a paleness came over her—the pulses of her heart paused, and then beat tumultuously—how strange—how fatal were the words she read!—

“Died suddenly at the inn at the Mola di Gaeta, on her way from Naples, Clorinda, the wife of the honourable Horatio Saville, in the twenty-second year of her age.”

Her drawing-room door was opened, the butler announced Miss Derham, while her eyes still were fixed on the paragraph: her head swam round—the world seemed to slide from under

her. Fanny's calm clear voice recalled her. She conquered her agitation—she spoke as if she had not just crossed a gulf—not been transported to a new world ; and, again, swifter than light, brought back to the old one. She conversed with Fanny for some time ; giving some kind of explanation for not having been to see Ethel, begging her young friend to press her invitation, and speaking as if in autumn they should all meet again. Fanny, philosophic as she was, regarded Lady Lodore with a kind of idolatry. The same charm that had fascinated the unworldly and abstracted Saville, she exercised over the thoughtful and ingenuous mind of the fair young student. It was the attraction of engaging manners, added now to the sense of right, joined to the timid softness of a woman, who trembled on acting unsupported, even though her conscience approved her deeds. It was her loveliness which had gained in expression what it had lost in youth, and kindness of heart was the soul of the enchantment. Fanny

ventured to remonstrate against her sudden departure. "O we shall soon meet again," said Cornelia; but her thoughts were more of heaven than earth, as the scene of meeting; for her heart was chilled—her head throbbled—the words she had read operated a revolution in her frame, more allied to sickness and death, than hope or triumph.

Fanny at length took her leave, and Lady Lodore was again alone. She took up the newspaper—hastily she read again the tidings; she sunk on the sofa, burying her face in the pillow, trying not to think, while she was indeed the prey to the wildest thoughts.

"Yes," thus ran her reflections, "he is free—he is no longer *married*! Fool, fool! he is still lost to you!—an outcast and a beggar, shall I solicit his love! which he believes that I rejected when prosperous. Rather never, never, let me see him again. My beauty is tarnished, my youth flown; he would only see me to wonder how he had ever loved me. Better hide

beneath the mountains among which I am soon to find a home—better, far better, die, than see Saville and read no love in his eyes.

“ Yet thus again I cast happiness from me. What then would I do? Unweave the web—implore Mr. Villiers to endure my presence—reveal my state of beggary—ask thanks for my generosity, and humbly wait for a kind glance from Saville, to raise me to wealth as well as to happiness.—Cornelia, awake!—be not subdued at the last—act not against your disposition, the pride of your soul—the determinations you have formed—do not learn to be humble in adversity—you, who were disdainful in happier days—no! if they need me—if they love me—if Saville still remembers the worship—the heart’s entire sacrifice which once he made to me—will a few miles—the obscurity of my abode—or the silence and mystery that surrounds me, check his endeavours that we should once again meet?

“ No!” she said, rising, “ my destiny is in other and higher hands than my own. It were

vain to endeavour to controul it. Whatever I do, works against me ; now let the thread be spun to the end, while I do nothing ; I can but endure the worst patiently ; and how much better to bear in silence, than to struggle vainly with the irrevocable decree ! I submit. Let Providence work out its own ends, and God dispose of the being he has made—whether I reap the harvest in this world or in the next, my part is played, I will strive no more !”

She believed in her own singleness of purpose as she said this, and yet she was never more deceived. While she boasted of her resignation, she was yielding not to a high moral power, but to the pride of her soul. Her resolutions were in accordance with the haughtiness of her disposition, and she felt satisfied, not because she was making a noble sacrifice, but because she thus adorned more magnificently the idol she set up for worship, and believed herself to be more worthy of applause and love. Yet who could condemn even errors that led to such un-

bending and heroic forgetfulness of all the baser propensities of our nature. Nor was this feeling of triumph long-lived ; the wounding and humiliating realities of life, soon degraded her from her pedestal, and made her feel, as it were, the disgrace and indignities of abdication.

Her travelling chariot drove up to the door, and, after a few moments' preparation, she was summoned. Again she looked round the room ; her heart swelled high with impatience and repining, but again she conquered herself. She took up her miniature—*that* now she might possess—for she could remember without sin—she took up the newspaper, which did or did not contain the fiat of her fate ; but this action appeared to militate against the state of resignation she had resolved to attain, so she threw it down : she walked down the stairs, and passed out from her house for the last time—she got into the carriage—the door was closed—the horses were in motion—all was over.

Her head felt sick and heavy ; she leaned

back in her carriage half stupified. When at last London and its suburbs were passed, the sight of the open country a little revived her—but she soon drooped again. Nothing presented itself to her thoughts with any clearness, and the exultation which had supported her vanished totally. She only knew that she was alone, poor, forgotten; these words hovered on her lips, mingled with others, by which she endeavoured to charm away her despondency. Fortitude and resignation for herself—freedom and happiness for Ethel. “O yes, she is free and happy—it matters not then what I am!” No tears flowed to soften this thought. The bright green country—the meadows mingled with unripe corn-fields—the tufted woods—the hedge-rows full of flowers, could not attract her eye; pangs every now and then seized upon her heart—she had talked of resignation, but she was delivered up to despair.

At length she sank into a kind of stupor. She was accompanied by one servant only; she

had told him where she intended to remain that night. It was past eleven before they arrived at Reading; the night was chill, and she shivered while she felt as if it were impossible to move, even to draw up the glasses of her chariot. When she arrived at the inn where she was to pass the night, she felt keenly the discomfort of having no female attendant. It was new—she felt as if it were disgraceful, to find herself alone among strangers, to be obliged to give orders herself, and to prepare alone for her repose.

All night she could not sleep, and she became aware at last that she was ill. She burnt with fever—her whole frame was tormented by aches, by alternate hot and shivering fits, and by a feeling of sickness. When morning dawned, it was worse. She grew impatient—she rose. She had arranged that her servant should quit her at this place. He had been but a short time with her, and was easily dismissed under the idea, that she was to be joined by a man recommended by a friend, who was accustomed to the

continent, whither it was supposed that she was going. She had dismissed him the night before, he was already gone, when on the morrow she ordered the horses.—She paid the bills herself—and had to answer questions about luggage; all these things are customary to the poor, and to the other sex. But take a high-born woman and place her in immediate contact with the rough material of the world, and see how like a sensitive plant she will shrink, close herself up and droop, and feel as if she had fallen from her native sphere into a spot unknown, ungenial, and full of storms.

The illness that oppressed Lady Lodore, made these natural feelings even more acute, till at last they were blunted by the same cause. She now wondered what it was that ailed her, and became terrified at the occasional wanderings that interrupted her torpor. Once or twice she wished to speak to the post-boy, but her voice failed her. At length they drove up to the inn at Newbury; fresh horses were called

for, and the landlady came up to the door of the carriage, to ask whether the lady had breakfasted — whether she would take anything. There was something ghastly in Lady Lodore's appearance, which at once frightened the good woman, and excited her compassion. She renewed her questions, which Lady Lodore had not at first heard, adding, "You seem ill, ma'am ; do take something — had you not better alight?"

"O yes, far better," said Cornelia, "for I think I must be very ill."

The change of posture and cessation of motion a little revived her, and she began to think that she was mistaken, and that it was all nothing, and that she was well. She was conducted into the parlour of the inn, and the landlady left her to order refreshment. "How foolish I am," she thought ; "this is mere fancy ; there is nothing the matter with me ;" and she rose to ring the bell, and to order horses. When suddenly, without any previous warning, struck as by a bolt, she fainted, and

fell on the floor, without any power of saving herself. The sound of her fall quickened the steps of the landlady, who was returning; all the chamber-maids were summoned, a doctor sent for, and when Lady Lodore opened her eyes she saw unknown faces about her, a strange place, and voices yet stranger. She did not speak, but tried to collect her thoughts, and to unravel the mystery, as it appeared, of her situation. But soon her thoughts wandered, and fever and weakness made her yield to the solicitations of those around. The doctor came, and could make out nothing but that she was in a high fever: he ordered her to be put to bed. And thus—Saville, and Ethel, and all hopes and fears, having vanished from her thoughts,—given up to delirium and suffering, poor Lady Lodore, alone, unknown, and unattended, remained for several weeks at a country inn—under the hands of a village doctor—to recover, if God pleased, if not, to sink, unmourned and unheard of, into an untimely grave.

CHAPTER XIV.

But if for me thou dost forsake
Some other maid, and rudely break
Her worshipped image from its base,
To give to me the ruined place—

Then fare thee well—I'd rather make
My bower upon some icy lake,
When thawing suns begin to shine,
Than trust to love so false as thine !

LALLA ROOKH.

ON the same day Mr. and Mrs. Villiers left their sad dwelling to take possession of Lady Lodore's house. The generosity and kindness of her mother, such as it appeared, though she knew but the smallest portion of it, charmed Ethel. Her heart, which had so long struggled to love

her, was gladdened by the proofs given that she deserved her warmest affection. The truest delight beamed from her lovely countenance. Even she had felt the gloom and depression of adversity. The sight of misery or vice in those around her tarnished the holy fervour with which she would otherwise have made every sacrifice for Edward's sake. There is something in this world, which even while it gives an unknown grace to rough, and hard, and mean circumstances, contaminates the beauty and harmony of the noble and exalted. Ethel had been aware of this; she dreaded its sinister influence over Villiers, and in spite of herself she pined; she had felt with a shudder that in spite of love and fortitude, a sense, chilling and deponding, was creeping over her, making her feel the earth alien to her, and calling her away from the sadness of the scene around to a world bright and pure as herself. Her very despair thus dressed itself in the garb of religion; and though these visitations of melancholy only came

during the absence of Villiers and were never indulged in, yet they were too natural a growth of their wretched abode to be easily or entirely dismissed. Even now that she was restored to the fairer scenes of life, compassion for the unfortunate beings she quitted haunted her, and her feelings were too keenly alive to the miseries which her fellow-creatures suffered, to permit her to be relieved from all pain by her own exemption. She turned from such reflections to the image of her dear kind mother with delight. The roof that sheltered her was hallowed as hers; all the blessings of life which she enjoyed came to her from the same source as life itself. She delighted to trace the current of feeling which had occasioned her to give up so much, and to imagine the sweetness of disposition, the vivacity of mind, the talents and accomplishments which her physiognomy expressed, and the taste manifested in her house, and all the things which she had collected around her, evinced.

In less than a month after their liberation, she

gave birth to son. The mingled danger and rejoicing attendant on this event, imparted fresh strength to the attachment that united Edward to her; and the little stranger himself was a new object of tenderness and interest. Thus their days of mourning were exchanged for a happiness most natural and welcome to the human heart. At this time also Horatio Saville returned from Italy with his little girl. She was scarcely more than a year old, but displayed an intelligence to be equalled only by her extraordinary beauty. Her golden silken ringlets were even then profuse, her eyes were as dark and brilliant as her mother's, but her complexion was fair, and the same sweet smile flitted round her infant mouth, as gave the charm to her father's face. He idolized her, and tried by his tenderness and attention to appease, as it were, the manes of the unfortunate Clorinda.

She, poor girl, had been the victim of the violence of passion and ill-regulated feelings native to her country, excited into unnatural

force by the singularity of her fate. When Saville saw her first in her convent, she was pining for liberty ; she did not think of any joy beyond escaping the troublesome impertinence of the nuns and the monotonous tenor of monastic life, of associating with people she loved, and enjoying the common usages of life, unfettered by the restrictions that rendered her present existence a burthen. But though she desired no more, her disgust for the present, her longing for a change, was a powerful passion. She was adorned by talents, by genius ; she was eloquent and beautiful, and full of enthusiasm and feeling. Saville pitied her ; he lamented her future fate among her unworthy countrymen ; he longed to cherish, to comfort, and to benefit her. His heart, so easily won to tenderness, gave her readily a brother's regard. Others, seeing the active benevolence and lively interest that this sentiment elicited, might have fancied him inspired by a warmer feeling ; but he well knew the differ-

ence, he ardently desired her happiness, but did not seek his own in her.

He visited her frequently, he brought her books, he taught her English. They were allowed to meet daily in the parlour of the convent, in the presence of a female attendant; and his admiration of her talents, her imagination, her ardent comprehensive mind, increased on every interview. They talked of literature—the poets—the arts; Clorinda sang to him, and her fine voice, cultivated by the nicest art, was a source of deep pleasure and pain to her auditor. His sensibility was awakened by the tones of love and rapture—sensibility, not alas! for her who sang, but for the false and absent. While listening, his fancy recalled Lady Lodore's image; the hopes she had inspired, the rapture he had felt in her presence—the warm vivifying effect her voice and looks had on him were remembered, and his heart sank within him to think that all this sweetness was deceptive, fleeting, lost. Once, overcome by these thoughts,

he resolved to return suddenly to England, to make one effort more to exchange unendurable wretchedness for the most transporting happiness;—absence from Cornelia, to the joy of pouring out the overflowing sentiments of his heart at her feet. While indulging in this idea, a letter from his sister Lucy caused a painful revulsion; she painted the woman of the world given up to ambition and fashion, rejoicing in his departure, and waiting only the moment when she might with decency become the wife of another. Saville was almost maddened—he did not visit Clorinda for three days. She received him, when at last he came, without reproach, but with transport; she saw that sadness, even sickness, dimmed his eye; she soothed him, she hung over him with fondness, she sung to him her sweetest, softest airs; his heart melted, a tear stole from his eye. Clorinda saw his emotion; it excited hers; her Neapolitan vivacity was not restrained by shame nor fear,—she spoke of her love for him

with the vehemence she felt, and youth and beauty hallowed the frankness and energy of her expressions. Saville was touched and pleased,—he left her to meditate on this new state of things—for free from passion himself, he had never suspected the growth of it in her heart. He reflected on all her admirable qualities, and the pity it was that they should be cast at the feet of one of her own unrefined, uneducated countrymen, who would be incapable of appreciating her talents—even her love—so that at last she would herself become degraded, and sink into that system of depravity which makes a prey of all that is lovely or noble in our nature. He could save her—she loved him, and he could save her; lost as he was to real happiness, it were to approximate to it, if he consecrated his life to her welfare.

Yet he would not deceive her. The excess of love which she bestowed demanded a return which he could not give. She must choose whether, such as he was, he were worth accept-

ing. Actuated by a sense of justice, he opened his heart to her without disguise : he told her of his ill-fated attachment to another—of his self-banishment, and misery—he declared his real and earnest affection for her—his desire to rescue her from her present fate, and to devote his life to her. Clorinda scarcely heard what he said,—she felt only that she might become his—that he would marry her ; her rapture was undisguised, and he enjoyed the felicity of believing that one so lovely and excellent would at once owe every blessing of life to him, and that the knowledge of this must ensure his own content. The consent of her parents was easily yielded,—the Pope is always ready to grant a dispensation to a Catholic wife marrying a Protestant husband,—the wedding speedily took place—and Saville became her husband.

Their mutual torments now began. Horatio was a man of high and unshrinking principle. He never permitted himself to think of Lady Lodore, and the warmth and tenderness of his

heart led him to attach himself truly and affectionately to his wife. But this did not suffice for the Neapolitan. Her marriage withdrew the veil of life—she imagined that she distinguished the real from the fictitious, but her new sense of discernment was the source of torture. She desired to be loved as she loved; she insisted that her rival should be hated—she was shaken by continual tempests of jealousy, and the violence of her temper, restrained by no reserve of disposition, displayed itself frightfully. Saville reasoned, reproached, reprehended, without any avail, except that when her violence had passed its crisis, she repented, and wept, and besought forgiveness. Ethel's visit had been a blow hard to bear. She was the daughter of her whom Saville loved—whom he regretted—on whom he expended that passion and idolatry, to attain which she would have endured the most dreadful tortures. These were the reflections, or rather, these were the ravings, of Clorinda. She had never been so furious in her jealousy, or so

frequent in her fits of passion, as during the visit of the unconscious and gentle Ethel.

The birth of her child operated a beneficial change for a time ; and except when Saville spoke of England, or she imagined that he was thinking of it, she ceased to torment him. He was glad ; but the moment was passed when she could command his esteem, or excite his spontaneous sympathy. He pitied and he loved her ; but it was almost as we may become attached to an unfortunate and lovely maniac ; less than ever did he seek his happiness in her. He loved his infant daughter now better than any other earthly thing. Clorinda rejoiced in this tie, though she soon grew jealous even of her own child.

The arrival of Lord Maristow and his daughters was at first full of benefit to the discordant pair. Clorinda was really desirous of obtaining their esteem, and she exerted herself to please : when they talked of her return to England with them, it only excited her to

try to render Italy so agreeable as to induce them to remain there. They were not like Ethel. They were good girls, but fashionable and fond of pleasure. Clorinda devised a thousand amusements—concerts, tableaux, the masquerades of the carnival, were all put in requisition. They carried their zeal for amusement so far as to take up their abode for a day or two at Pompeii, feigning to be its ancient inhabitants, and, bringing the *corps operatique* to their aid, got up Rossini's opera of the *Ultimi Giorni di Pompeii* among the ruins, ending their masquerade by a mimic eruption. These gaieties did not accord with the classic and refined tastes of Saville; but he was glad to find his wife and sisters agree so well, and under the blue sky, and in the laughing land of Naples, it was impossible not to find beauty and enjoyment even in extravagance and folly.

Still, like a funeral bell heard amidst a feast, the name of England, and the necessity of her going thither, struck on the ear and chilled the

heart of the Neapolitan. She resolved never to go ; but how could she refuse to accompany her husband's sisters ? how resist the admonitions and commands of his father ? She did not refuse therefore—she seemed to consent—while she said to Saville, “ Poison, stab me—cast me down the crater of the mountain—exhaust your malice and hatred on me as you please here—but you shall never take me to England but as a corpse.”

Saville replied, “ As you will.” He was tired of the struggle, and left the management of his departure to others.

One day his sisters described the delights of a London season, and strove to win Clorinda by the mention of its balls, parties, and opera ; they spoke of Almack's, and the leaders of fashion ; they mentioned Lady Lodore. They were unaware that Clorinda knew any thing of their brother's attachment, and speaking of her as one of the most distinguished of their associates in the London world, made their sister-

in-law aware, that when she made a part of it, she would come into perpetual contact with her rival. This allusion caused one of her most violent paroxysms of rage as soon as she found herself alone with her husband. So frantic did she seem, that Horatio spoke seriously to his father, and declared he knew of no argument nor power which could induce Clorinda to accompany them to England. "Then you must go without her," said Lord Maristow; "your career, your family, your country, must not be sacrificed to her unreasonable folly." And then, wholly unaware of the character of the person with whom he had to deal, he repeated the same thing to Clorinda. "You must choose," he said, "between Naples and your husband—he must go; do you prefer being left behind?"

Clorinda grew pale, even livid. She returned home. Horatio was not there; she raved through her house like a maniac; her servants even hid her child from her, and she rushed

from room to room tearing her hair, and calling for Saville. At length he entered; her eyes were starting from her head, her frame working with convulsive violence; she strove to speak—to give utterance to the vehemence pent up within her. She darted towards him; when suddenly, as if shot to the heart, she fell on the marble pavement of her chamber, and a red stream poured from her lips—she had burst a blood-vessel.

For many days she was not allowed to speak nor move. Saville nursed her unremittingly—he watched by her at night—he tried to soothe her—he brought her child to her side—his sweetness, and gentleness, and real tenderness were all expended on her. Although violent, she was not ungenerous. She was touched by his attentions, and the undisguised solicitude of his manner. She resolved to conquer herself, and in a fit of heroism formed the determination to yield, and to go to England. Her first words, when permitted to speak, were to sig-

nify her assent. Saville kissed and thanked her. She had half imagined that he would imitate her generosity, and give up the journey. No such thought crossed his mind ; her distaste was too unreasonable to elicit the smallest sympathy, and consequently any concession. He thanked her warmly, it is true ; and looked delighted at this change, but without giving her time to retract, he hurried to communicate to his relations the agreeable tidings.

As she grew better she did not recede, but she felt miserable. The good spirits and ready preparations of Horatio were all acts of treason against her : sometimes she felt angry—but she checked herself. Like all Italians, Clorinda feared death excessively ; besides that, to die was to yield the entire victory to her rival. She struggled therefore, and conquered herself ; and neither expressed her angry jealousy nor her terrors. She had many causes of fear ; she was again in a situation to increase her family within a few months ; and while her safety depended

on her being able to attain a state of calm, she feared a confinement in England, and believed that it was impossible that she should survive.

She was worn to a skeleton—her large eyes were sunk and ringed with black, while they burnt with unnatural brilliancy, for her vivacity did not desert her, and that deceived those around; they fancied that she was convalescent, and would soon recover strength and good looks, while she nourished a deep sense of wrong for the slight attention paid to her sufferings. She wept over herself and her friendless state. Her husband was not her friend, for he was not her countryman: and full as Saville was of generous sympathy and kindness for all, the idea of returning to England, to his home and friends, to the stirring scenes of life, and the society of those who loved literature, and were endowed with the spirit of liberal inquiry and manly habits of thinking, so absorbed and delighted him, that he could only thank Clorinda again and again

—caress her, and entreat her to get well, that she might share his pleasures. His words chilled her, and she shrunk from his caresses. “He is thinking of *her*, and of seeing *her* again,” she thought. She did him the most flagrant injustice. Saville was a man of high and firm principle, and had he been aware of any latent weakness, of any emotion allied to the master-passion of his soul, he would have conquered it, or have fled from the temptation. He never thought less of Lady Lodore than now. The unwonted gentleness and concessions of his wife—his love for his child, and the presence of his father and dear sisters, dissipated his regrets,—his conscience was wholly at ease, and he was happy.

Clorinda dared not complain to her English relatives, but she listened to the lamentations of her Neapolitan friends with a luxury of woe. They mourned over her as if she were going to visit another sphere; they pointed out the little island on a map, and seated far off as it

was amidst the northern sea, night and storms, they averred, perpetually brooded over it, while from the shape of the earth they absolutely proved that it was impossible to get there. It is true that Lord Maristow and his daughters, and Saville himself, had come thence—that was nothing—it was easy to come away. “You see,” they said, “the earth slopes down, and the sun is before them; but when they have to go back, ah! it is quite another affair; the Alps rise, and the sea boils over, and they have to toil up the wall of the world itself into winter and darkness. It is tempting God to go there. O stay, Clorinda, stay in sunny Italy. Orazio will return: do not go to die in that miserable birth-place of night and frost.”

Clorinda wept yet more bitterly over her hard fate, and the impossibility of yielding to their wishes. “Would to God,” she thought, “I could abandon the ingrate, and let him go far from Italy and Clorinda, to die in his

wretched country ! Would I could forget, hate, desert him ! Ah, why do I idolize one born in that chilly land, where love and passion are unknown or despised !”

At length the day arrived when they left Naples. It was the month of May, and very warm. No imagination could paint the glorious beauty of this country of enchantment, on the completion of spring, before the heats of summer had withered its freshness. The sparkling waves of the blue Mediterranean encircled the land, and contrasted with its hues : the rich foliage of the trees--the festooning of the luxuriant vines, and the abundant vegetation which sprung fresh from the soil, decorating the rocks, and mantling the earth with flowers and verdure, were all in the very prime and blossoming of beauty. The sisters of Saville expressed their admiration in warm and enthusiastic terms ; the words trembled on poor Clorinda's lips ; she was about to say, “ Why then desert this land of bliss ?” but Horatio

spoke instead: “It is splendid, I own, and once I felt all that you express. Now a path along a grassy field—a hedge-row—a copse with a rill murmuring through it—a white cottage with simple palings enclosing a flower-garden—the spire of a country church rising from among a tuft of elms—the skies all shadowy with soft clouds—and the homesteads of a happy thriving peasantry—these are the things I sigh for. A true English home-scene seems to me a thousand times more beautiful, as it must be a thousand times dearer than the garish showy splendour of Naples.”

Clorinda’s thoughts crept back into her chilled heart; large tear-drops rose in her eyes, but she concealed them, and shrinking into a corner of the carriage, she felt more lonely and deserted than she would have done among strangers who had loved Italy, and participated in her feelings.

They arrived at the inn called the Villa di Cicerone, at the Mola di Gaeta. All the beauty of the most beautiful part of the Peninsula

seems concentrated in that enchanting spot—the perfume of orange flowers filled the air—the sea was at their feet—the vine-clad hills around. All this excess of loveliness only added to the unutterable misery of the Neapolitan girl. Her companions talked and laughed, while she felt her frame convulsed by internal combats, and the unwonted command she exercised over her habitual vehemence. Horatio conversed gaily with his sisters, till catching a glimpse of the pale face of his wretched wife, her mournful eyes and wasted cheeks, he drew near her. “You are fatigued, dearest Clorinda,” he said, “will you not go to rest?”

He said this in a tender caressing tone, but she felt, “He wants to send me away—to get rid even of the sight of me.” But he sat down by her, and perceiving her dejection, and guessing partly at its cause, he soothed her, and talked of their return to her native land, and cheered her by expressions of gratitude for the sacrifice she was making. Her heart began to soften, and her tears to flow more freely, when a

man entered, such as haunt the inns in Italy, and watch for the arrival of rich strangers to make profit in various ways out of them. This man had a small picture for sale, which he declared to be an original Carlo Dolce. It was the head of a seraph painted on copper—it was probably a copy, but it was beautifully executed; besides the depth of colour and grace of design, there was something singularly beautiful in the expression of the countenance portrayed,—it symbolized happiness and love; a beaming softness animated the whole face; a perfect joy, an ineffable radiance shone out of it. Clorinda took it in her hand—the representation of heart-felt gladness increased her self-pity; she was turning towards her husband with a reproachful look, thinking, “Such smiles you have banished from my face for ever,”—when Sophia Saville, who was looking over her shoulder, exclaimed, “What an extraordinary resemblance! there was never any thing so like.”

“Who? what?” asked her sister.

“ It is Lady Lodore herself,” replied Sophia; “ her eyes, her mouth, her very smile.”

Lucy gave a quick glance towards her brother. Horatio involuntarily stepped forward to look, and then as hastily drew back. Clorinda saw it all—she put down the picture, and left the room—she could not stay—she could not speak—she knew not what she felt, but that a fiery torture was eating into her, and she must fly, she knew not whither. Saville was pained ; he hesitated what to do or say—so he remained ; supper was brought in, and Clorinda not appearing, it was supposed that she had retired to rest. In about an hour and a half after, Horatio went into her room, and to his horror beheld her stretched upon the cold bricks of the chamber, senseless ; the moonbeams rested on her pale face, which bore the hues of death. In a moment the house was alarmed, the village doctor summoned, a courier dispatched to Naples for an English physician, and every possible aid afforded the wretched

sufferer. She was placed on the bed,—she still lived; her faint pulse could not be felt, and no blood flowed when a vein was opened, but she groaned, and now and then opened her eyes with a ghastly stare, and closed them again as if mechanically. All was horror and despair—no help—no resource presented itself; they hung round her, they listened to her groans with terror, and yet they were the only signs of life that disturbed her death-like state. At last, soon after the dawn of day, she became convulsed, her pulse fluttered, and blood flowed from her wounded arm; in about an hour from this time she gave birth to a dead child. After this she grew calmer and fainter. The physician arrived, but she was past mortal cure,—she never opened her eyes more, nor spoke, nor gave any token of consciousness. By degrees her groans ceased, and she faded into death: the slender manifestations of lingering vitality gradually decreasing till all was still and cold. After an hour or two her face

resumed its loveliness, pale and wasted as it was: she seemed to sleep, and none could regret that repose possessed that heart, which had been alive only to the deadliest throes of unhappy passion. Yet Saville did more than regret—he mourned her sincerely and deeply,—he accused himself of hard-heartedness,—he remembered what she was when he had first seen her;—how full of animation, beauty, and love. He did not remember that she had perished the victim of uncontrolled passion; he felt that she was his victim. He would have given worlds to restore her to life and enjoyment. What was a residence in England—the promises of ambition—the pleasures of his native land—all that he could feel or know, compared to the existence of one so young, so blessed with Heaven's choicest gifts of mind and person. She was his victim, and he could never forgive himself.

For his father's and sisters' sake he subdued the expression of his grief, for they also loved

Clorinda, and were struck with sorrow at the sudden catastrophe. His strong mind, also, before long, mastered the false view he had taken of the cause of her death. He lamented her deeply, but he did not give way to unavailing remorse, which was founded on his sensibility, and not on any just cause for repentance. He turned all his thoughts to repairing her errors, rather than his own, by cherishing her child with redoubled fondness. The little girl was too young to feel her loss; she had always loved her father, and now she clung to his bosom and pressed her infant lips to his cheek, and by her playfulness and caresses repaid him for the tenderness that he lavished on her.

After some weeks spent in the north of Italy he returned to England with her. Lord Maristow and his daughters were already there, and had gone to Maristow Castle. Saville took up his abode with his cousin Villiers. His situation was new and strange. He found himself in the very abode of the dreaded

Cornelia, yet she was away, unheard of, almost, it seemed, forgotten. Did he think of her as he saw the traces of by-gone scenes around? He played with his child—he secluded himself among his books—he talked with Ethel of what had happened since their parting, and reproached Villiers bitterly for not having applied to him in his distress. But a kind of spell sealed the lips of each, and Lady Lodore, who was the living spirit of the scene around—the creator of its peace and happiness—seemed to have passed away from the memory of all. It was in appearance only. Not an hour, not a minute of the day passed, that did not bring her idea to their minds, and Saville and Ethel each longed for the word to be uttered by either, which would permit them to give expression to the thoughts that so entirely possessed them.

CHAPTER XV.

The music

Of man's fair composition best accords,
When 'tis in consort, not in single strains :
My heart has been untuned these many months,
Wanting her presence, in whose equal love
True harmony consisted.

FORD.

AT the beginning of September the whole party assembled at Maristow Castle. Even Mrs. Elizabeth Fitzhenry was among the guests. She had not visited Ethel in London, because she would not enter Lady Lodore's house, but she had the true spinster's desire of seeing the baby, and thus overcame her reluctance to quitting Longfield for a few weeks. Fanny Derham

also accompanied them, unable to deny Ethel's affectionate entreaties. Fanny's situation had been beneficially changed. Sir Gilbert Derham, finding that his granddaughter associated with people *in the world*, and being applied to by Lord Maristow, was induced to withdraw Mrs. Derham from her mean situation, and to settle a small fortune on each of her children. Fanny was too young, and too wedded to her platonic notions of the supremacy of mind, to be fully aware of the invaluable advantages of pecuniary independence for a woman. She fancied that she could enter on the career—the only career permitted her sex—of servitude, and yet possess her soul in freedom and power. She had never, indeed, thought much of these things: life was, as it concerned herself, a system of words only. As always happens to the young, she only knew suffering through her affections, and the real chain of life—its necessities and cares—and the sinister influences exercised by the bad passions of

our fellow-creatures—had not yet begun to fetter her aspiring thoughts. Beautiful in her freedom, in her enthusiasm, and even in her learning, but, above all, in the lively kindness of her heart, she excited the wonder and commanded the affections of all. Saville had never seen any one like her—she brought to his recollection his own young feelings before experience had lifted “the painted veil which those who live call life,” or passion and sorrow had tamed the ardour of his mind; he looked on her with admiration, and yet with compassion, wondering where and how the evil spirit of the world would show its power to torment, and conquer the free soul of the disciple of wisdom.

Yet Saville’s own mind was rather rebuked than tamed: he knew what suffering was, yet he knew also how to endure it, and to turn it to advantage, deriving thence lessons of fortitude, of forbearance, and even of hope. It was not, however, till the seal on his lips was taken

off, and the name of Cornelia mentioned, that he became aware that the same heart warmed his bosom, as had been the cause at once of such rapture and misery in former times. Yet even now he did not acknowledge to himself that he still loved, passionately, devotedly loved, Lady Lodore. The image of the pale Clorinda stretched on the pavement—his victim—still dwelt in his memory, and he made a sacrifice at her tomb of every living feeling of his own. He fancied, therefore, that he spoke coldly of Cornelia, with speculation only, while in fact, at the very mention of her name a revulsion took place in his being—his eyes brightened, his face beamed with animation, his very figure enlarged, his heart was on fire within him. Villiers saw and appreciated these tokens of passion; but Ethel only perceived an interest in her mother, shared with herself, and was half angry that he made no professions of the constancy of his attachment.

Still, day after day, and soon, all day long,

they talked of Lady Lodore. None but a lover and a daughter could have adhered so pertinaciously to one subject; and thus Saville and Ethel were often left to themselves, or joined only by Fanny. Fanny was very mysterious and alarming in what she said of her beautiful and interesting favourite. While Ethel lamented her mother's love of the continent, conjectured concerning her return, and dwelt on the pleasures of their future intercourse, Fanny shook her head, and said, "It was strange, very strange, that not one letter had yet reached them from her." She was asked to explain, but she could only say, that when she last saw Lady Lodore, she was impressed by the idea that all was not as it seemed. She tried to appear as if acting according to the ordinary routine of life, and yet was evidently agitated by violent and irrepressible feeling. Her manner, she had herself fancied, to be calm, and yet it betrayed a wandering of thought, a fear of being scrutinized,

manifested in her repetition of the same phrases, and in the earnestness with which she made assurances concerning matters of the most trivial import. This was all that Fanny could say, but she was intimately persuaded of the correctness of her observation, and lamented that she had not inquired further and discovered more. “For,” she said, “the mystery, whatever it is, springs from the most honourable motives. There was nothing personal nor frivolous in the feelings that mastered her ;” and Fanny feared that at that very moment she was sacrificing herself to some project—some determination, which, while it benefited others, was injuring herself. Ethel, with all her affection for her mother, was not persuaded of the justice of these suspicions, nor could be brought to acknowledge that the mystery of Lady Lodore’s absence was induced by any motives as strange and forcible as those suggested by Fanny ; but believed that her young friend was carried away by her own imagination and high-flown ideas.

Saville was operated differently upon. He became uneasy, thoughtful, restless: a thousand times he was on the point of setting out to find a clue to the mystery, and to discover the abode of the runaway,—but he was restrained. It is usually supposed that women are always under the influence of one sentiment, and if Lady Lodore acted under the direction and for the sake of another, wherefore should Saville interfere? what right had he to investigate her secrets, and disturb her arrangements?

Several months passed. Mrs. Elizabeth Fitzhenry returned to Longfield, and still the mystery concerning Ethel's mother continued, and the wonder increased. Soon after Christmas Mr. Gayland, who was also Lord Maristow's solicitor, came down to the Castle for a few days. He made inquiries concerning Lady Lodore, and was somewhat surprised at her strange disappearance and protracted absence. He asked several questions, and seemed to form conclusions in his own mind; he excited the

curiosity of all, yet restrained himself from satisfying it; he was evidently disquieted by her unbroken silence, yet feared to betray the origin of his uneasiness.

While he remained curiosity was dominant: when he went he requested Villiers to be good enough to let him know if any thing should be heard of Lady Lodore. He asked this more than once, and required an absolute promise. After his departure, his questions, his manner, and his last words recurred, exciting even more surprise than when he had been present. Fanny brought forward all he said to support her own conjectures; a shadow of disquiet crossed Ethel's mind; she asked Villiers to take some steps to discover where her mother was, and on his refusal argued earnestly, though vainly, to persuade him to comply. Villiers was actuated by the common-place maxim of not interfering with the actions and projects of others. "Lady Lodore is not a child," he said, "she knows what she is about—has she not always avoided

you, Ethel? Why press yourself inopportunately upon her?"

But Ethel was not now to be convinced by the repetition of these arguments. She urged her mother's kindness and sacrifice; her having given up her home to them; her house still unclaimed by her, still at their disposal, and which contained so many things which must have been endeared by long use and habit, and the relinquishing of which showed something extraordinary in her motives. This was a woman's feeling, and made little impression on Villiers—he was willing to praise and to thank Lady Lodore for her generosity and kindness, but he suspected nothing beyond her acknowledged acts.

Saville heard this disquisition; he wished Villiers to be convinced—he was persuaded that Ethel was right—he was angry at his cousin's obstinacy—he was miserable at the idea that Cornelia should feel herself treated with neglect—that she should need protection and not

have it—that she should be alone, and not find assistance proffered, urged upon her. He mounted his horse and took a solitary ride, meditating on these things—his imagination became heated, his soul on fire. He pictured Lady Lodore in solitude and desertion, and his heart boiled within him. Was she sick, and none near her?—was she dead, and her grave unvisited and unknown? A lover's fancy is as creative as a poet's, and when once it takes hold of any idea, it clings to it tenaciously. If it is thus even with ordinary minds, how much more with Saville, with all the energy which was his characteristic, and the latent fire of love burning in his heart. His resolution was sudden, and acted on at once. He turned his horse's head towards London. On reaching the nearest town, he ordered a chaise and four post horses. He wrote a few hurried lines announcing an absence of two or three days, and with the rapidity that always attended the conception of his purposes and their execution, the next

morning, having travelled all night, he was in Mr. Gayland's office, questioning that gentleman concerning Lady Lodore, and seeking from him all the light he could throw upon her long-continued and mysterious absence.

Mr. Gayland had promised Lady Lodore not to reveal her secret to Mr. or Mrs. Villiers; but he felt himself free to communicate it to any other person. He was very glad to get rid of the burden and even the responsibility of being her sole confidant. He related all he knew to Saville, and the truth flashed on the lover's mind. His imagination could not dupe him—he could conceive, and therefore believe in her generosity, her magnanimity. He had before, in some degree, divined the greatness of mind of which Lady Lodore was capable; though as far as regarded himself, her pride, and his modesty, had deceived him. Now he became at once aware that Cornelia had beggared herself for Ethel's sake. She had disposed of her jointure, given up the residue of her income,

and wandered away, poor and alone, to avoid the discovery of the extent and consequences of her sacrifices. Saville left Mr. Gayland's office with a bursting and a burning heart. At once he paid a warm tribute of admiration to her virtues, and acknowledged to himself his own passionate love. It became a duty, in his eyes, to respect, revere, adore one so generous and noble. He was proud of the selection his heart had made, and of his constancy. "My own Cornelia," such was his reverie, "how express your merit and the admiration it deserves!—other people talk of generosity, and friendship, and parental affection—but you manifest a visible image of these things; and while others theorize, you embody in your actions all that can be imagined of glorious and angelic." He congratulated himself on being able to return to the genuine sentiments of his heart, and in finding reality give sanction to the idolatry of his soul.

He longed to pour out his feelings at her

feet, and to plead the cause of his fidelity and affection, to read in her eyes whether she would see a reward for her sufferings in his attachment. Where was she, to receive his protestations and vows? He half forgot, in the fervour of his feelings, that he knew not whither she had retreated, nor possessed any clue whereby to find her. He returned to Mr. Gayland to inquire from him ; but he could tell nothing ; he went to her house and questioned the servants, they remembered nothing ; at last he found her maid, and learnt from her, where she was accustomed to hire her post-horses ; this was all the information at which he could arrive.

Going to Newman's, with some difficulty he found the post-boy, who remembered driving her. By his means he traced her to Reading, but here all clue was lost. The inn to which she had gone had passed into other hands, and no one knew any thing about the arrivals and departures of the preceding summer. He made

various perquisitions, and lighted by chance on the servant she had taken with her to Reading, and there dismissed. From what he said, and a variety of other circumstances, he became convinced that she had gone abroad. He searched the foreign passport-office, and found that one had been taken out at the French Ambassador's in the month of April, by a Mrs. Fitzhenry. He persuaded himself that this was proof that she had gone to Paris. It was most probable that, impoverished as she was, and desirous of concealing her altered situation, that she should, as Lodore had formerly done, dismiss a title which would at once encumber and betray her. He immediately resolved to cross to France. And yet for a moment he hesitated, and reflected on what it was best to do.

He had given no intimation of his proceedings to his cousin, and they were unaware that his journey was connected with Lady Lodore. He had a lover's wish to find her himself—himself to be the only source of consolation—the

only mediator to restore her to her daughter and to happiness. But his fruitless attempts at discovery made him see that his wishes were not to be effected easily. He felt that he ought to communicate all he knew to his cousins, and even to ensure their assistance in his researches. Before going abroad, therefore, he returned to Maristow Castle.

He arrived late in the evening. Lord Maristow and his daughters were gone out to dinner. The three persons whom Saville especially wished to see, alone occupied the drawing-room. Edward was writing to his father, who had advised him, now that he had a son, entirely to cut off the entail and mortgage a great part of the property : it was a distasteful task to answer the suggestions of unprincipled selfishness. While he was thus occupied, Ethel had taken from her desk her mother's last letter, and was reading it again and again, weighing every syllable, and endeavouring to discover a hidden meaning. She went over to the sofa on which Fanny was sitting, to commu-

nicate to her a new idea that had struck her. The studious girl had got into a corner with her Cicero, and was reading the *Tusculan Questions*, which she readily laid aside to enter on a subject so deeply interesting. Saville opened the door, and appeared most unexpectedly among them. His manner was eager and abrupt, and the first words he uttered were, "I am come to disturb you all, and to beg of you to return to London:—no time must be lost—can you go to-morrow?"

"Certainly," said Villiers, "if you wish it."

"But why?" asked Ethel.

"You have found Lady Lodore!" exclaimed Fanny.

"You are dreaming, Fanny," said Ethel; "you see Horace shakes his head. But if we go to-morrow, yet rest to-night. You are fatigued, pale, and ill, Horace—you have been exerting yourself too much—explain your wishes, but take repose and refreshment."

Saville was in too excited a state to think of either. He repelled Ethel's feminine offers, till

he had related his story. His listeners heard him with amazement. Villiers's cheeks glowed with shame, partly at the injustice of his former conduct—partly at being the object of so much sacrifice and beneficence on the part of his mother-in-law. Fanny's colour also heightened ; she clasped her hands in delight, mingling various exclamations with Saville's story. “ Did I not say so ? I was sure of it. If you had seen her when I did, on the day of her going away, you would have been as certain as I.” Ethel wept in silence, her heart was touched to the core, “ the remorse of love ” awakened in it. How cold and ungrateful had been all her actions : engrossed by her love for her husband, she had bestowed no sympathy, made no demonstrations towards her mother. The false shame and Edward's oft-repeated arguments which had kept her back, vanished from her mind. She reproached herself bitterly for lukewarmness and neglect ; she yearned to show her repentance—to seek forgiveness—to express, however feebly, her sense of her mother's angelic

goodness. Her tears flowed to think of these things, and that her mother was away, poor and alone, believing herself wronged in all their thoughts, resenting perhaps their unkindness, mourning over the ingratitude of her child.

When the first burst of feeling was over, they discussed their future proceedings. Saville communicated his discoveries and his plan of crossing to France. Villiers was as eager as his cousin to exert himself actively in the pursuit. His ingenuous and feeling mind was struck by his injustice, and he was earnest in his wish to atone for the past, and to recompense her, if possible, for her sacrifices. As every one is apt to do with regard to the ideas of others, he was not satisfied with his cousin's efforts or conclusions; he thought more questions might be asked—more learnt at the inns on the route which Lady Lodore had taken. The passport Saville had imagined to be hers, was taken out for Dover. Reading was far removed from any road to Kent. They argued this. Horatio was not convinced; but while he

was bent on proceeding to Paris, Edward resolved to visit Reading—to examine the neighbourhood—to requestion the servants—to put on foot a system of inquiry which must in the end assure them whether she was still in the kingdom. It was at once resolved, that on the morrow they should go to London.

Thither they accordingly went. They repaired to Lady Lodore's house. Saville on the next morning departed for France, and a letter soon reached them from him, saying, that he felt persuaded that the Mrs. Fitzhenry was Lady Lodore, and that he should pursue his way with all speed to Paris. It appeared, that the lady in question had crossed to Calais on the eleventh of June, and intimated her design of going to the Bagneres de Bigorre among the Pyrennees, passing through Paris on her way. The mention of the Bagneres de Bigorre clinched Saville's suspicions—it was such a place as one in Lady Lodore's position might select for her abode—distant, secluded, situated in sublime and beautiful scenery, singularly cheap,

and seldom visited by strangers ; yet the annual resort of the French from Bordeaux and Lyons, civilized what otherwise had been too rude and wild for an English lady. It was a long journey thither—the less wonder that nothing was heard, or seen, or surmised concerning the absentee by her numerous acquaintances, many of whom were scattered on the continent. Saville represented all these things, and expressed his conviction that he should find her. His letter was brief, for he was hurried, and he felt that it were better to say nothing than to express imperfectly the conflicting emotions alive in his heart. “ My life seems a dream,” he said at the conclusion of his letter ; “ a long painful dream, since last I saw her. I awake, she is not here ; I go to seek her—my actions have that single scope—my thoughts tend to that aim only ; I go to find her—to restore her to Ethel. If I succeed in bestowing this happiness on her, I shall have my reward, and, whatever happens, no selfish regret shall tarnish my delight.”

He urged Villiers, meanwhile, not to rely too

entirely on the conviction so strong in himself, but to pursue his plan of discovery with vigour. Villiers needed no spur. His eagerness was fully alive ; he could not rest till he had rescued his mother-in-law from solitude and obscurity. He visited Reading ; he extended his inquiries to Newbury : here more light broke in on his researches. He heard of Lady Lodore's illness—of her having resided for several months at a villa in the neighbourhood, while slowly recovering from a fever by which for a long time her life had been endangered. He heard also of her departure, her return to London. Then again all was obscurity. The innkeepers and letters of post-horses in London, were all visited in vain—the mystery became as impenetrable as ever. It seemed most probable that she was living in some obscure part of the metropolis—Ethel's heart sunk within her at the thought.

Edward wrote to Saville to communicate this intelligence, which put an end to the idea of her being in France—but he was already gone on to

Bagneres. He himself perambulated London and its outskirts, but all in vain. The very thought that she should be residing in a place so sad, nay, so humiliating, without one gilding circumstance to solace poverty and obscurity, was unspeakably painful both to Villiers and his wife. Ethel thought of her own abode in Duke street during her husband's absence, and how miserable, and forlorn it had been—she now wept bitterly over her mother's fate; even Fanny's philosophy could not afford consolation for these ideas.

An accident, however, gave a new turn to their conjectures. In the draw of a work-table, Ethel found an advertisement cut out of a newspaper, setting forth the merits of a cottage to be let near Rhaiyder Gowy in Radnorshire, and with this, a letter from the agent at Rhaiyder, dated the 13th of May, in answer to inquiries concerning the rent and particulars. The letter intimated, that if the account gave satisfaction, the writer would get the cottage prepared for

the tenant immediately, and the lady might take possession at the time mentioned, on the 1st of June. The day after finding this letter, Villiers set out for Wales.

But first he persuaded Ethel to spend the interval of his absence at Longfield. She had lately fretted much concerning her mother, and as she was still nursing her baby, Edward became uneasy at her pale cheeks and thinness. Ethel was anxious to preserve her health for her child; she felt that her uneasiness and pining would be lessened by a removal into the country. She was useless in London, and there was something in her residence in her mother's house—in the aspect of the streets—in the memory of what she had suffered there, and the fear that Lady Lodore was enduring a worse repetition of the same evils, that agitated and preyed upon her. Her aunt had pressed her very much to come and see her, and she wrote to say, that she might be expected on the following day. She bade adieu to Villiers with more of hope with

regard to his success than she had formerly felt. She became half convinced that her mother was not in London. Fanny supported her in these ideas; they talked continually of all they knew — of the illness of Lady Lodore—of her firmness of purpose in not sending for her daughter, or altering her plans in consequence; they comforted themselves that the air of Wales would restore her health, and the beauty of the scenery and the freedom of nature sooth her mind. They were full of hope — of more—of expectation. Ethel, indeed, had at one time proposed accompanying her husband, but she yielded to his entreaties, and to the fear suggested, that she might injure her child's health. Villiers's motions would be more prompt without her. They separated. Ethel wrote to Saville a letter to find him at Paris, containing an account of their new discoveries, and then prepared for her journey to Essex with Fanny, her baby, and the beautiful little Clorinda Saville, who had been left under her care, on the following day.

CHAPTER XVI.

I am not One who much or oft delights
To season my Friends with personal talk,—
Of Friends who live within an easy walk,
Or Neighbours, daily, weekly in my sight.
And, for my chance acquaintance, Ladies bright.
Sons, Mothers, Maidens withering on the stalk,
These all wear out of me, like Forms, with chalk
Painted on rich men's floors, for one feast-night.

WORDSWORTH.

MRS. ELIZABETH FITZHENRY returned to Longfield from Maristow Castle at the end of the month of November. She gladly came back, in all the dinginess and bleakness of that dismal season, to her beloved seclusion at Longfield. The weather was dreary, a black frost invested every thing with its icy chains, the landscape

looked disconsolate, and now and then wintry blasts brought on snow-storms, and howled loudly through the long dark nights. The amiable spinster drew her chair close to the fire; with half-shut eyes she contemplated the glowing embers, and recalled many past winters just like this, when Lodore was alive and in America; or, diving yet deeper into memory, when the honoured chair she now occupied, had been dignified by her father, and she had tried to sooth his querulous complaints on the continued absence of her brother Henry. When, instead of these familiar thoughts, the novel ones of Ethel and Villiers intruded themselves, she rubbed her eyes to be quite sure that she did not dream. It was a lamentable change; and who the cause? Even she whose absence had been, she felt, wickedly lamented at Maristow Castle, Cornelia Santerre—she, who in an evil hour, had become Lady Lodore, and who would before God, answer for the disasters and untimely death of her ill-fated husband.

With any but Mrs. Fitzhenry, such accusations had, after the softening process of time, been changed to an admission, that, despite her errors, Lady Lodore had rather been misled and mistaken, than heinously faulty ; and her last act, in sacrificing so much to her daughter, although the extent of her sacrifice was unknown to her sister-in-law, had cancelled her former delinquencies. But the prejudiced old lady was not so easily mollified ; she was harsh alone towards her, but all the gall of her nature was collected and expended on the head of her brother's widow. Probably an instinctive feeling of her unreasonableness made her more violent. Her language was bitter whenever she alluded to her—she rejoiced at her absence, and instead of entering into Ethel's gratitude and impatience, she fervently prayed that she might never appear on the scene again.

Mrs. Elizabeth Fitzhenry was less of a gossip than any maiden lady who had ever lived singly in the centre of a little village. Her heart was

full of the dead and the absent—of past events, and their long train of consequences, so that the history of the inhabitants of her village, possessed no charm for her. If any one among them suffered from misfortune she endeavoured to relieve them, and if any died, she lamented, moralized on the passage of time, and talked of Lodore's death ; but the scandal, the marriages, the feuds, and wonderful things that came to pass at Longfield, appeared childish and contemptible, the flickering of earth-born tapers compared to the splendour, the obscurity, and final setting of the celestial luminary which had been the pole-star of her life.

It was from this reason that Mrs. Fitzhenry had not heard of the Lady who lodged at Dame Nixon's cottage, in the Vale of Bewling, till the time, when, after having exhausted the curiosity of Longfield, she was almost forgotten. The Lady, she was known by no other name, had arrived in the town during Mrs. Fitzhenry's visit to Maristow castle. She had arrived in

her own chariot, unattended by any servant; the following day she had taken up her abode at Dame Nixon's cottage, saying, that she was only going to stay a week: she had continued there for more than three months.

Dame Nixon's cottage was situated about a mile and a half from Longfield. It stood alone in a little hollow embowered by trees; the ground behind rose to a slight upland, and a rill trickled through the garden. You got to it by a bye path, which no wheeled vehicle could traverse, though a horse might, and it was indeed the very dingle and cottage which Ethel had praised during her visit into Essex in the preceding year. The silence and seclusion were in summer tranquillizing and beautiful; in winter sad and drear; the fields were swampy in wet weather, and in snow and frost it seemed cut off from the rest of the world. Dame Nixon and her granddaughter lived there alone. The girl had been engaged to be married. Her lover jilted her, and wedded a richer bride. The story is so

old, that it is to be wondered that women have not ceased to lament so common an occurrence. Poor Margaret was, on the contrary, struck to the heart—she despised herself for being unable to preserve her lover's affections, rather than the deceiver for his infidelity. She neglected her personal appearance, nor ever showed herself among her former companions, except to support her grandmother to church. Her false lover sat in the adjoining pew. She fixed her eyes on her Prayer-book during the service, and on the ground as she went away. She did not wish him to see the change which his faithlessness had wrought, for surely it would afflict him. Once there had not bloomed a fresher or gayer rose in the fields of Essex—now she had grown thin and pale—her young light step had become slow and heavy—sickness and sorrow made her eyes hollow, and her cheeks sunken. She avoided every one, devoting herself to attendance on her grandmother. Dame Nixon was nearly doting. Life was ebbing fast from her old

frame ; her best pleasure was to sun herself in the garden in summer, or to bask before the winter's fire. While enjoying these delights, her dimmed eyes brightened, and a smile wreathed her withered lips ; she said, " Ah ! this is comfortable ;" while her broken-hearted grandchild envied a state of being which could content itself with mere animal enjoyment. They were very poor. Margaret had to work hard ; but the thoughts of the head, or, at least, the feelings of the heart, need not wait on the labour of the hands. The Sunday visit to church kept alive her pain ; her very prayers were bitter, breathed close to the deceiver and her who had usurped her happiness : the memory and anticipation haunted her through the week ; she was often blinded by tears as she patiently pursued her household duties, or her toil in their little garden. Her hands were hardened with work, her throat, her face sunburnt ; but exercise and occupation did not prevent her from wasting away, or her cheek from becoming sunk and wan.

Dame Nixon's cottage was poor but roomy; some years before, a gentleman from London had, in a freak, hired two rooms in it, and furnished them. Since then, she had sometimes let them, and now they were occupied by the stranger lady. At first all three of the inhabitants appeared each Sunday at church. The Lady was dressed in spotless and simple white, and so closely veiled, that no one could see her face; of course she was beautiful. Soon after Mrs. Elizabeth's return from Maristow Castle, it was discovered that first the lady stayed away, and soon, that the whole party absented themselves on Sunday; and as this defalcation demanded inquiry, it was discovered that a pony chaise took them three miles off to the church of the nearest village. This was a singular and yet a beneficial change. The false swain must rejoice at losing sight of the memento of his sin, and Margaret would certainly pray with a freer heart, when she no longer shrunk from his gaze and that of his wife.

It was not until the end of January that Mrs. Elizabeth heard of the Lady ; it was not till the beginning of February that she asked a single question about her.

In January, passing the inn-yard, the curate's wife, who was walking with her, said, " There is the chariot belonging to the Lady who lodges at dame Nixon's cottage. I wonder who she is. The arms are painted out."

" Ah, dame Nixon has a lodger then ; that is a good thing, it will help her through the winter. I have not seen her or her daughter at church lately."

" No," replied the other, " they go now to Bewling church."

" I am glad to hear it," said Mrs. Fitzhenry ; " it is much better for poor Margaret not to come here."

The conversation went on, and the Lady was alluded to, but no questions were asked or curiosity excited. In February she heard from the doctor's wife, that the doctor had been to

the cottage, and that the Lady was indisposed. She heard at the same time that this Lady had refused to receive the visits of the curate's lady and the doctor's lady—excusing herself, that she was going to leave Essex immediately. This had happened two months before. On hearing of her illness, Mrs. Elizabeth thought of calling on her, but this stopped her. “It is very odd,” said the doctor's wife, “she came in her own carriage, and yet has no servants. She lives in as poor a way as can be, down in that cottage, yet my husband says she is more like the Queen of England in her looks and ways than any one he ever saw.”

“Like the Queen of England?” said Mrs. Fitzhenry, “What queen?—Queen Charlotte?” who had been the queen of the greater part of the good lady's life.

“She is as young and beautiful as an angel,” said the other, half angry; “it is very mysterious. She did not look downcast like, as if any thing was wrong, but was as cheerful and

condescending as could be. ‘Condescending, Doctor,’ said I, for my husband used the word ; ‘you don’t want condescension from a poor body lodging at dame Nixon’s.’—‘A poor body!’ said he, in a huff, ‘she is more of a lady, indeed more like the Queen of England than any rich body you ever saw.’ And what is odd, no one knows her name—Dame Nixon and Margaret always call her Lady—the very marks are picked out from her pocket handkerchiefs. Yet I did hear that there was a coronet plain to be seen on one—a thing impossible unless she was a poor cast-away ; and the doctor says he’d lay his life that she was nothing of that. He must know her name when he makes out her bill, and I told him to ask it plump, but he puts off, and puts off, till I am out of all patience.”

A misty confused sense of discomfort stole over Mrs. Elizabeth when she heard of the coronet in the corner of the pocket handkerchief, but it passed away without suggesting

any distinct idea to her mind. Nor did she feel curiosity about the stranger—she was too much accustomed to the astonishment, the conjectures, the gossip of Longfield, to suppose that there was any real foundation for surprise, because its wonder-loving inhabitants choose to build up a mystery out of every common occurrence of life.

This absence of inquisitiveness must long have kept Mrs. Fitzhenry in ignorance of who her neighbour was, and the inhabitants of Longfield would probably have discovered it before her, had not the truth been revealed even before she entertained a suspicion that there was any secret to be found out.

“ I beg your pardon, ma'am,” said her maid to her one evening, as she was superintending the couchée of the worthy spinster, “ I think you ought to know, though I am afraid you may be angry.”

The woman hesitated; her mistress encouraged her. “ If it is any thing I ought to

know, Wilmot, tell it at once, and don't be afraid. What has happened to you?"

"To me, ma'am,—la! nothing," replied the maid; "it's something about the Lady at dame Nixon's, only you commanded me never to speak the name of ——"

And again the good woman stopped short. Mrs. Fitzhenry, a little surprised, and somewhat angry, bade her go on. At length, in plain words she was told:

"Why, ma'am, the Lady down in the Vale is no other than my lady—than Lady Lodore."

"Ridiculous—who told you so?"

"My own eyes, ma'am; I shouldn't have believed any thing else. I saw the Lady, and it was my Lady, as sure as I stand here."

"But how could you know her? it is years since you saw her."

"Yes, ma'am," said the woman, with a smile of superiority; "but it is not easy to forget Lady Lodore. See her yourself, ma'am,—you will know then that I am right."

Wilmot had lived twenty years with Mrs. Fitzhenry. She had visited town with her at the time of Ethel's christening. She had been kept in vexatious ignorance of subsequent events, till the period of the visit of her mistress and niece to London two years before, when she indemnified herself. Through the servants of Villiers, and of the Misses Saville, she had learnt a vast deal; and not satisfied with mere hearsay, she had seen Lady Lodore several times getting into her carriage at her own door, and had even been into her house: such energy is there in a liberal curiosity. The same disinterested feeling had caused her to go down to dame Nixon's with an offer from her mistress of service to the Lady, hearing she was ill. She went perfectly unsuspecting of the wonderful discovery she was about to make, and was thus rewarded beyond her most sanguine hopes, by being in possession of a secret, known to herself alone. The keeping of a secret is, however, a post of no honour if all knowledge be confined to

the possessor alone. Mrs. Wilmot was tolerably faithful, with all her love of knowledge ; she was sure it would vex her mistress if Lady Lodore's strange place of abode were known at Longfield, and Mrs. Fitzhenry was consequently the first person to whom she had hinted the fact. All this account she detailed with great volubility. Her mistress recommended discretion most earnestly ; and at the same time expressed a doubt whether her information was correct.

“ I wish you would go and judge for yourself, ma'am,” said the maid.

“ God forbid !” exclaimed Mrs. Fitzhenry. “ God grant I never see Lady Lodore again ! She will go soon. You tell me that dame Nixon says she is only staying till she is well. She will go soon, and it need never be known, except to ourselves, Wilmot, that she was ever here.”

There was a dignity in this eternal mystery that somewhat compensated for the absence of won-

der and fuss which the woman had anticipated with intense pleasure. She assured her mistress, over and over again, of her secrecy and discretion, and was dismissed with the exhortation to forget all she had learnt as quickly as possible.

“Wherefore did she come here? what can she be doing?” Mrs. Fitzhenry asked herself over and over again. She could not guess. It was strange, it was mysterious, and some mischief was at the bottom—but she would go soon—“would that she were already gone!”

It must be mentioned that Mrs. Elizabeth Fitzhenry had left Maristow Castle before the arrival of Mr. Gayland, and had therefore no knowledge of the still more mysterious cloud that enveloped Lady Lodore's absence. Ignorant of her self-destroying sacrifices and generosity, her pity was not excited, her feelings were all against her. She counted the days as they passed, and looked wistfully at Wilmot, hoping that she would quickly bring tidings of the Lady's de-

parture. In vain; the doctor ceased to visit the cottage, but the Lady remained. All at once the doctor visited it again with greater assiduity than ever—not on account of his beautiful patient—but Dame Nixon had had a paralytic stroke, and the kind Lady had sent for him, and promised to defray all the expenses of the poor woman's illness.

All this was truly vexatious. Mrs. Fitzhenry fretted, and even asked Wilmot questions, but the unwelcome visitor was still there. Wherefore? What could have put so disagreeable a whim into her head? The good lady could think of no motive, while she considered her presence an insult. She was still more annoyed when she received a letter from Ethel. It had been proposed that Mr. and Mrs. Villiers should pay her a visit in the spring; but now Ethel wrote to say that she might be immediately expected. "I have strange things to tell you about my dear mother," wrote Ethel; "it is very uncertain where she is. Horatio can hear nothing of

her at Paris, and will soon return. Edward is going to Wales, as there seems a great likelihood that she has secluded herself there. While he is away you may expect me. I shall not be able to stay long—he will come at the end of a week to fetch me.”

Mrs. Fitzhenry shuddered. Her prejudices were stronger than ever. She experienced the utmost wretchedness from the idea that the residence of Lady Lodore would be discovered, and a family union effected. It seemed desecration to the memory of her brother, ruin to Ethel—the greatest misfortune that could befall any of them. Her feelings were exaggerated, but they were on that account the more powerful. How could she avert the evil?—a remedy must be sought, and she fixed on one—a desperate one, in truth, which appeared to her the sole mode of saving them all from the greatest disasters.

She resolved to visit Lady Lodore ; to represent to her the impropriety and wickedness of

her having any intercourse with her daughter, and to entreat her to depart before Ethel's arrival. Her violence might almost seem madness; but all people who live in solitude become to a certain degree insane. Their views of things are not corrected by comparing them with those of others; and the strangest want of proportion always reigns in their ideas and sentiments.

CHAPTER XVII.

So loth we part from all we love,
From all the links that bind us ;
So turn our hearts, where'er we rove,
To those we've left behind us.

THOMAS MOORE.

ON the following morning Mrs. Elizabeth Fitzhenry drove to the Vale of Bewling. It was the last day of February. The March winds were hushed as yet ; the breezes were balmy, the sunshine cheerful ; a few soft clouds flecked the heavens, and the blue sky appeared between them calm and pure. Each passing air breathed life and happiness—it caressed the cheek—and the swelling buds of the trees felt

its quickening influence. The almond-trees were in bloom—the pear blossoms began to whiten—the tender green of the young leaves showed themselves here and there among the hedges. The old lady felt the cheering influence, and would have become even gay, had not the idea of the errand she was on checked her spirits. Sometimes the remembrance that she was really going to see her sister-in-law absolutely startled her; once or twice she thought of turning back; she passed through the lanes, and then alighting from her carriage, walked by a raised foot-way, across some arable fields—and again through a little grove; the winding path made a turn, and dame Nixon's white, low-roofed cottage was before her. Every thing about it looked trim, but very humble: and it was unadorned during this early season by the luxury of flowers and plants, which usually give even an appearance of elegance to an English cottage. Mrs. Fitzhenry opened the little gate—her knees trembled as

she walked through the scanty garden, which breathed of the new-sprung violets. The entrance to the cottage was by the kitchen : she entered this, and found Margaret occupied by a culinary preparation for her grandmother. Mrs. Fitzhenry asked after the old woman's health, and thus gained a little time. Margaret answered in her own former quiet yet cheerful voice ; she was changed from what she had been a few weeks before. The bloom had not returned to her cheeks, but they no longer appeared streaked with deathly paleness ; her motions had lost the heaviness that showed a mind ill at ease. Mrs. Elizabeth congratulated her on the restoration of her health.

“ O yes,” she replied, with a blush, “ I am not the same creature I used to be, thank God, and the angel he has sent us here ;—if my poor grandmother would but get well I should be quite happy ; but that is asking too much at her time of life.”

The old lady made no further observations :

she did not wish to hear the praises of her sister-in-law. “Your lodger is still here?” at length she said.

“Yes, God be praised!” replied Margaret.

“Will you give her my compliments, and say I am here, and that I wish to see her.”

“Yes, ma’am,” said Margaret; “only the lady has refused to see any one, and she does not like being asked.”

“I do not wish to be impertinent or intrusive,” answered Mrs. Elizabeth; “only tell her my name, and if she makes any objection, of course she will do as she likes. Where is she?”

“She is sitting with my poor grandmother; the nurse—Heaven bless her! she would hire a nurse, to spare me, as she said—is lain down to sleep, and she said she would watch by grandmother while I got the gruel; but it’s ready now, and I will go and tell her.”

Away tripped Margaret, leaving her guest lost in wonder. Lady Lodore watching the

sick-bed of an old cottager—Lady Lodore immured in a poverty-stricken abode, fit only for the poorer sort of country people. It was more than strange, it was miraculous. “Yet she refused to accompany poor Henry to America! there must be some strange mystery in all this, that does not tell well for her.”

So bitterly uncharitable was the unforgiving old lady towards her brother's widow. She ruminated on these things for a minute or two, and then Margaret came to usher her into the wicked one's presence. The sitting-room destined for the lodger was neat, though very plain. The walls were wainscotted and painted white,—the windows small and latticed,—the furniture was old black, shining mahogany; the chairs high-backed and clumsy; the table heavy and incommodious; the fire-place large and airy; and the shelf of the mantel-piece almost as high as the low ceiling: there were a few things of a more modern construction; a comfortable sofa, a rose-wood bureau and large

folding screen; near the fire was a large easy chair of Gillows's manufacture, two light cane ones, and two small tables; vases filled with hyacinths, jonquils, and other spring flowers stood on one, and an embroidery frame occupied the other. There was a perfume of fresh-gathered flowers in the room, which the open window rendered very agreeable. Lady Lodore was standing near the fire—for Wilmot was not mistaken, and it was she indeed who now presented herself to Mrs. Fitzhenry's eyes)—she might be agitated—she did not show it—she came forward and held out her hand. “Dear Bessy,” she said, “you are very kind to visit me; I thank you very much.”

The poor recluse was overpowered. The cordiality of the greeting frightened her: she who had come full of bitter reproach and hard purposes, to be thanked with that sweet voice and smile. “I thought,” at length she stammered out, “that you did not wish to be known. I am glad you are not offended, Cornelia.”

“Offended by kindness? O no! It is true

I did not wish—I do not wish that it should be known that I am here—but since, by some strange accident, you have discovered me, how can I help being grateful for your visit? I am indeed glad to see you; it is so long since I have heard any thing. Ah! dear Bessy, tell me, how is Ethel?”

Tears glistened in the mother's eyes: she asked many questions, and Mrs. Fitzhenry a little recovered her self-possession, as she answered them. She looked at Lady Lodore—she was changed—she could not fail of being changed after so many years,—she was no longer a beautiful girl, but she was a lovely woman. Despite the traces of years, which however lightly they impressed, yet might be discerned; expression so embellished her that it was impossible not to admire; brilliancy had given place to softness, animation to serenity; still she was fair—still her silken hair clustered on her brow, and her sweet eyes were full of fire; her smile had more than its former charm—it came from the heart.

Mrs. Fitzhenry was not, however, to be subdued by a little outward show. She was there, who had betrayed and deserted (such were the energetic words she was accustomed to employ) the noble, broken-hearted Lodore. The thought steeled her purpose, and she contrived at last to ask whether Lady Lodore was going to remain much longer in Essex?

“I have been going every day since I came here. In a few weeks I shall certainly be gone. Why do you ask?”

“Because I thought—that is—you have made a secret of your being here, and I expect Ethel in a day or two, and she would certainly discover you.”

“Why should she not?” asked Lady Lodore. “Why should you be averse to my seeing Ethel?”

It is very difficult to say a disagreeable thing, especially to one unaccustomed to society, and who is quite ignorant of the art of concealing the sting of her intentions by flowery

words. Mrs. Fitzhenry said something about her sister-in-law's own wishes, and the desire expressed by Lodore that there should be no intercourse between the mother and daughter.

Cornelia's eyes flashed fire—"Am I," she exclaimed, "to be always the sacrifice?" Is my husband's vengeance to pursue me beyond his grave—even till I reach mine? Unjust as he was, he would not have desired this."

Mrs. Elizabeth coloured with anger. Lady Lodore continued—"Pardon me, Bessy, I do not wish to say any thing annoying to you or in blame of Lodore. God knows I did him great wrong—but—"

"O Cornelia," cried the old lady, "do you indeed acknowledge that you were to blame?"

Lady Lodore smiled, and said, "I were strangely blind to the defects of my own character, and to the consequences of my actions, were I not conscious of my errors; but retrospection is useless, and the punishment has been—is—sufficiently severe. Lodore himself

would not have perpetuated his resentment, had he lived only a very little while longer. But I will speak frankly to you, Bessy, as frankly as I may, and you shall decide on my further stay here. From circumstances which it is immaterial to explain, I have resolved on retiring into absolute solitude. I shall never live in London again—never again see any of my old friends and acquaintances. The course of my life is entirely changed; and whether I live here or elsewhere, I shall live in obscurity and poverty. I do not wish Ethel to know this. She would wish to assist me, and she has scarcely enough for herself. I do not like being a burthen—I do not like being pitied—I do not like being argued with, or to have my actions commented upon. You know that my disposition was always independent.”

Mrs. Elizabeth assented with a sigh, casting up her eyes to heaven.

Lady Lodore smiled, and went on. “You think this is a strange place for me to live in :

whether here or elsewhere, I shall never live in any better : I shall be fortunate if I find myself as well off when I leave Essex, for the people here are good and honest, and the poor girl loves me,—it is always pleasant to be loved.”

A tear again filled Cornelia’s eyes—she tried to animate herself to smile. “ I have nothing to love in all the wide world except Ethel ; I do love her ; every one must love her—she is so gentle—so kind—so warm-hearted and beautiful,—I love her more than my own heart’s blood ; she is my child—part of that blood—part of myself—the better part ; I have seen little of her, but every look and word is engraved on my heart. I love her voice—her smiles—the pressure of her soft white hand. Pity me, dear Bessy, I am never to see any of these, which are all that I love on earth, again. This idea fills me with regret—with worse—with sorrow. There is a grave not far from here which contains one you loved beyond all others,—what would you not give to see him

alive once again? To visit his tomb is a consolation to you. I must not see even the walls within which my blessed child lives. You alone can help me—can be of comfort to me. Do not refuse—do not send me away. If I leave this place, I shall go to some secluded nook in Wales, and be quite—quite alone; the sun will shine, and the grass will grow at my feet, but my heart will be dead within me, and I shall pine and die. I have intended to do this; I have waited only till the sufferings of the poor woman here should be at an end, that I may be of service to Margaret, and then go. Your visit, which I fancied meant in kindness, has put other thoughts into my head.

“Do not object to my staying here; let me remain; and do yet more for me—come to me sometimes, and bring me tidings of my daughter—tell me what she says—how she looks,—tell me that she is at each moment well and happy. Ah! do this, dear Bessy, and I will bless you. I shall never see her—at least not for years;

there are many things to prevent it: yet how could I drag out those years quite estranged from her? My heart has died within me each time I have thought of it. But I can live as I say; I shall expect you every now and then to come and talk to me of her; she need never know that I am so near—she comes so seldom to Essex. I shall soon be forgotten at Longfield. Will you consent? you will do a kind action, and God will bless you.”

Mrs. Fitzhenry was one of those persons who always find it difficult to say, No; and Lady Lodore asked with so much earnestness that she commanded; she felt that her request ought to be granted, and therefore it was impossible to refuse it. Before she well knew what she had said, the good lady had yielded her consent and received her sister-in-law's warm and heart-felt thanks.

Mrs. Fitzhenry looked round the room: “But how can you think of staying here, Cornelia?” she said; “this place is not fit for you.

I should have thought that you could never have endured such homely rooms."

"Do you think them so bad?" replied the lady; "I think them very pleasant, for I have done with pride, and I find peace and comfort here. Look," she continued, throwing open a door that led into the garden, "is not that delightful? This garden is very pretty: that clear rivulet murmurs by with so lulling a sound;—and look at these violets, are they not beautiful? I have planted a great many flowers, and they will soon come up. Do you not know how pleasant it is to watch the shrubs we plant, and water, and rear ourselves?—to see the little green shoots peep out, and the leaves unfold, and then the flower blossom and expand, diffusing its delicious odour around,—all, as it were, created by oneself, by one's own nursing, out of a bit of stick or an ugly bulb? This place is very pretty, I assure you: when the leaves are on the trees they make a bower, and the grove behind the house is shady,

and leads to lanes and fields more beautiful than any I ever saw. I have loitered for hours in this garden, and been quite happy. Now I shall be happier than ever, thanks to you. You will not forget me. Come as often as you can. You say that you expect Ethel soon?"

Lady Lodore walked with her sister-in-law to the garden-gate, and beyond, through the little copse, still talking of her daughter. "I cannot go further," she said, at last, "without a bonnet—so good-bye, dear Bessy. Come soon. Thank you—thank you for this visit."

She held out her hand: Mrs. Fitzhenry took it, pressed it, a half feeling came over her as if she were about to kiss the cheek of her offending relative, but her heart hardened, she blushed, and muttering a hasty good-bye, she hurried away. She was bewildered, and after walking a few steps, she turned round, and saw again the white dress of Cornelia, as a turn in the path hid her. The grand, the exclusive Lady Lodore—the haughty, fashionable, worldly-

heartless wife thus metamorphosed into a tender-hearted mother—suing to her for crumbs of charitable love—and hiding all her boasted advantages in that low-roofed cottage! What could it all mean?

Mrs. Fitzhenry walked on. Again she thought, “How odd! I went there, determining to persuade her to go away, and miserable at the thoughts of seeing her only once; and now I have promised to visit her often, and agreed that she shall live here. Have I not done wrong? What would my poor brother say? Yet I could not refuse. Poor thing! how could I refuse, when she said that she had nothing else to live for? Besides, to go away and live alone in Wales—it would be too dreadful; and she thanked me as if she were so grateful. I hope I have not done wrong.

“But how strange it is that Henry’s widow should have become so poor; she has given up a part of her income to Ethel, but a great deal remains. What can she have done with it?

She is mysterious, and there is never any good in mystery. Who knows what she may have to conceal?" Mrs. Elizabeth got in her carriage, and each step of the horses took her farther from the web of enchantment which Cornelia had thrown over her. "She is always strange,"—thus ran her meditations; "and how am I to see her, and no one find it out? and what a story for Longfield, that Lady Lodore should be living in poverty in dame Nixon's cottage. I forgot to tell her that—I forgot to say so many things I meant to say—I don't know why, except that she talked so much, and I did not know how to bring in my objections. But it cannot be right: and Ethel in her long rambles and rides with Miss Derham or Mr. Villiers, will be sure to find her out. I wish I had not seen her—I will write and tell her I have changed my mind, and entreat her to go away."

As it occurs to all really good-natured persons, it was very disagreeable to Mrs. Fitzhenry

to be angry, and she visited the ill-temper so engendered on the head of poor Cornelia. She disturbed herself by the idea of all the disagreeable things that might happen—of her sister-in-law's positive refusal to go; the very wording which she imagined for her intended letter puzzled and irritated her. She no longer felt the breath of spring as pleasant, but sat back in the chariot, “nursing her wrath to keep it warm.” When she reached her home, Ethel's carriage was at her door.

The meeting, as ever, between aunt and niece was affectionate. Fanny was welcomed, the baby was kissed, and little Clorinda admired, but the theme nearest Ethel's heart was speedily introduced—her mother. The inquietudes she felt on her account—Mr. Saville's journey to Paris—the visit of Villiers to Wales to discover her place of concealment—the inutility of all their endeavours.

“But why are they so anxious?” asked her aunt; “I can understand you: you have some

fantastic notion about your mother, but how can Mr. Villiers desire so very much to find her?"

"I could almost say," said Ethel, "that Edward is more eager than myself, though I should wrong my own affection and gratitude; but he was more unjust towards her, and thus he feels the weight of obligation more keenly; but, perhaps, dear aunt, you do not know all that my dearest mother has done for us—the unparalleled sacrifices she has made."

Then Ethel went on to tell her all that Mr. Gayland had communicated—the sale of her jointure—the very small residue of money she had kept for herself—the entire payment of Villiers's debts—and afterwards the surrender of the remainder of her income and of her house to them. Her eyes glistened as she spoke; her heart, overflowing with admiration and affection, shone in her beautiful face, her voice was pregnant with sensibility, and her expressions full of deep feeling.

Mrs. Elizabeth's heart was not of stone—far from it; it was, except in the one instance of her sister-in-law, made of pliable materials. She heard Ethel's story—she caught by sympathy the tenderness and pity she poured forth—she thought of Lady Lodore at the cottage, a dwelling so unlike any she had ever inhabited before—poverty-stricken and mean; she remembered her praises of it—her cheerfulness—the simplicity of taste which she displayed—the light-hearted content with which she spoke of every privation except the absence of Ethel. What before was mysterious wrong, was now manifest heroism. The loftiness and generosity of her mind rose upon the old lady unclouded; her own uncharitable deductions stung her with remorse; she continued to listen, and Ethel to narrate, and the big tears gathered in her eyes, and rolled down her venerable cheeks,—tears at once of repentance and admiration.

CHAPTER XX.

Repentance is a tender sprite ;
If aught on earth have heavenly might,
'Tis lodged within her silent tear.

WORDSWORTH.

MRS. ELIZABETH FITZHENRY was not herself aware of all that Lady Lodore had suffered, or the extent of her sacrifices. She guessed darkly at them, but it was the detail that rendered them so painful, and, but for their motive, humiliating to one nursed in luxury, and accustomed to all those intermediate servitors and circumstances, which stand between the rich and the bare outside of the working-day world. Cornelia shrunk from the address of those she

did not know, and from the petty acts of daily life, which had gone on before without her entering into their detail.

Her illness at Newbury had been severe. She was attacked by the scarlet fever; the doctor had ordered her to be removed from the bustle of the inn, and a furnished villa had been taken for her, while she could only give a languid assent to propositions which she understood confusedly. She was a long time very ill—a long time weak and slowly convalescent. At length health dawned on her, accompanied by a disposition attuned to content and a wish for tranquillity. Her residence was retired, commodious, and pretty; she was pleased with it, she did not wish to remove, and was glad to procrastinate from day to day any consideration of the future. Thus it was a long time before the strength of her thoughts and purposes was renewed, or that she began to think seriously of where she was, and what she was going to do.

During the half delirium, the disturbed and

uncontrollable, but not unmeaning reveries, of her fever, the idea of visiting Lodore's grave had haunted her pertinaciously. She had often dreamt of it: at one time the tomb seemed to rise in a lonely desert; and the dead slept peacefully beneath sunshine or starlight. At another, storms and howling winds were around, groans and sighs, mingled with the sound of the tempest, and menaces and reproaches against her were breathed from the cold marble. Now her imagination pictured it within the aisles of a magnificent cathedral; and now again the real scene—the rustic church of Longfield was vividly present to her mind. She saw the pathway through the green churchyard—the ruined ivy-mantled tower, which showed how much larger the edifice had been in former days, near which might be still discerned on high a niche containing the holy mother and divine child—the half-defaced porch on which rude monkish imagery was carved—the time-worn pews, and painted window. She had never entered this

church but once, many, many years ago ; and it was strange how in sleep and fever-troubled reverie, each portion of it presented itself distinctly and vividly to her imagination. During these perturbed visions, one other form and voice perpetually recurred. She heard Ethel continually repeat, " Come ! come !" and often her figure flitted round the tomb or sat beside it. Once, on awakening from a dream, which impressed her deeply by the importunity and earnestness of her daughter's appeal, she was forcibly impelled to consider it her duty to obey, and she made a vow that on recovering from her illness, she would visit her husband's grave.

Now while pondering on the humiliations and cheerless necessities which darkened her future, and rousing herself to form some kind of resolution concerning them, this dream was repeated, and on awakening, the memory of her forgotten vow renewed itself in her. She dwelt on it with pleasure. Here was something to be done that was not mere wretchedness and lonely wan-

dering—something that, connecting her with the past, took away the sense of desertion and solitude, so hard to bear. In the morning, at breakfast, it so chanced that she read in the *Morning Herald* a little paragraph announcing that Viscount Maristow was entertaining a party of friends at Maristow Castle, among whom were Mr. and Mrs. Villiers, and the Hon. Mrs. Elizabeth Fitzhenry. This was a fortunate coincidence. The dragon ceased for a moment to watch the garden, and she might avail herself of its absence to visit its treasure unnoticed and unknown. She put her project into immediate execution. She crossed the country, passing through London on her way to Longfield—she arrived. Without delay she fulfilled her purpose. She entered the church and viewed the tablet, inscribed simply with the name of Lodore, and the date of his birth and death. The words were few and commonplace, but they were eloquent to her. They told her that the cold decaying shape lay beneath,

which in the pride of life and love had clasped her in its arms as its own for evermore. Short-lived had been the possession. She had loosened the tie even while thought and feeling ruled the now insentient brain -- he had been scarcely less dead to her while inhabiting the distant Illinois, than now that a stone placed above him, gave visible token of his material presence, and the eternal absence of his immortal part. Cornelia had never before felt so sensibly that she had been a wife neglecting her duties, despising a vow she had solemnly pledged, estranging herself from him, who by religious ordinance, and the laws of society, alone had privilege to protect and love her. Nor had she before felt so intimately the change—that she was a widow ; that her lover, her husband, the father of her child, the forsaken, dead Lodore, was indeed no part of the tissue of life, action, and feeling to which she belonged.

Solitude and sickness had before awakened many thoughts in her mind, and she recalled

them as she sat beside her dead husband's grave. She looked into her motives, tried to understand the deceits she had practised on herself, and to purify her conscience. She meditated on time, that law of the world, which is so mysterious, and so potent ; ruling us despotically, and yet wholly unappreciated till we think upon it. Petrarch says, that he was never so young, but that he knew that he was growing old. Lady Lodore had never thought of this till a few months back ; it seemed to her, that she had never known it until now—that she felt that she was older—older than the vain and lovely bride of Lodore—than the haughty high-spirited friend of Casimir Lyzinski. And where was Casimir ? She had never heard of him again, she had scarcely ever thought of him ; he had grown older too—change, the effects of passion or of destiny, must have visited him also ;—they were all embarked on one mighty stream—Lodore had gained a haven ; but the living were still

at the mercy of the vast torrent—whither would it hurry them?

There was a charm in these melancholy and speculative thoughts to the beautiful exile—for we may be indeed as easily exiled by a few roods of ground, as by mountains and seas. A strong decree of fate banished Cornelia from the familiar past, into an unknown and strange present. Still she clung to the recollection of by-gone years, and for the first time gave way to reflections full of scenes and persons to be seen no more. The tomb beside which she lingered, was an outward sign of these past events, and she did not like to lose sight of it so soon. She heard that Mrs. Elizabeth Fitzhenry was to remain away for a month—so much time at least was hers. She inquired for lodgings, and was directed to Dame Nixon's cottage. She was somewhat dismayed at first by its penurious appearance, but "it would do for a few days;" and she found that what would serve for a few days, might serve for months.

“ Man wants but little here below,
Nor wants that little long.”

Most true for solitary man. It is society that increases his desires. If Lady Lodore had been visited in her humble dwelling by the least regarded among her acquaintances, she would have felt keenly its glaring deficiencies. But although used to luxury, Margaret's cuisine sufficed for herself alone; the low-roofed rooms were high enough, and the latticed windows which let in the light of heaven, fulfilled their purpose as well as the plate-glass and lofty embrasures of a palace.

Lady Lodore was obliged also to consider one other thing, which forms so large a portion of our meditations in real life—her purse. She found when settled in the cottage, in the Vale of Bewling, that her stock of money was reduced to one hundred pounds. She could not cross the country and establish herself at a distance from London with this sum only. She had before looked forward to selling her jewels and carriage as to a

distant event, but now she felt that it was the *next* thing she must do. She shrunk from it naturally: the very idea of revisiting London—of seeing its busy shops and streets—once so full of life and its purposes to her, and in which she would now wander an alien, was inconceivably saddening; she was willing to put off the necessity as long as possible, and thus continued to procrastinate her departure from Essex.

Mrs. Fitzhenry returned; but she could neither know nor dream of the vicinity of her sister-in-law. We are apt to think, when we know nothing of any one, that no one knows anything of us; experience can scarcely teach us, that the reverse of this is often the truth. Seeing only an old woman in her dotage—and a poor love-sick girl, who knew nothing beyond the one event which had blasted all her happiness—she never heard the inhabitants of Longfield mentioned, and believed that she was equally unheard of by them. Then her indisposition protracted her stay, and now the mortal illness of the poor woman. For she had become in-

terested for Margaret and promised to befriend her ; and in case of her grandmother's death, to take her from a spot where every association and appearance kept open the wounds inflicted by her unfaithful lover.

Time had thus passed on : now sad, now cheerful, she tried to banish every thought of the future, and to make the occurrences of each day fill and satisfy her mind. She lived obscurely and humbly, and perhaps as wisely as mortal may in this mysterious world, where hope is perpetually followed by disappointment, and action by repentance and regret. The days succeeded to each other in one unvaried tenor. The weather was cheerful, the breath of spring animating. She watched the swelling of the buds—the peeping heads of the crocuses—the opening of the anemones and wild wind-flowers, and at last, the sweet odour of the new-born violets, with all the interest created by novelty ; not that she had not observed and watched these things before, with transitory pleasure, but now the operations of

nature filled all her world ; the earth was no longer merely the dwelling place of her acquaintance, the stage on which the business of society was carried on, but the mother of life—the temple of God—the beautiful and varied store-house of bounteous nature.

Dwelling on these ideas, Cornelia often thought of Horatio Saville, whose conversations, now remembered, were the source whence she drew the knowledge and poetry of her present reveries. As solitude and nature grew lovely in her eyes, she yearned yet more fondly for the one who could embellish all she saw. Yet while her mind needed a companion so congenial to her present feelings, her heart was fuller of Ethel ; her affection for Saville was a calm though deep-rooted sentiment, resulting from the conviction, that she should find entire happiness if united to him, and in an esteem or rather an enthusiastic admiration of his talents and virtues, that led her to dwell with complacency on the hope, that he still remembered and loved

her : but the human heart is jealous, and with difficulty admits two emotions of equal force, and her love for her daughter was the master passion. The instinct of nature spoke audibly within her ; the atoms of her frame seemed alive each one as she thought of her ; often her tears flowed, often her eyes brightened with gladness when alone, and the beloved image of her beautiful daughter as she saw her last, smiling amidst penury and indignity, was her dearest companion by day and night. She alone made her present situation endurable, and yet separation from her was irksome beyond expression. Was she never to see or hear of her more ? It was very hard : she implored Providence to change the harsh decree—she longed inexpressibly for one word that had reference to her—one event, however slight, which should make her existence palpable.

When Margaret announced Mrs. Fitzhenry, her heart bounded with joy. She could ask concerning Ethel—hear of her ; her countenance

was radiant with delight, and she really for a moment thought her sister-in-law's visit was meant in kindness, since so much pleasure was the result. This conviction had produced the very thing it anticipated. She had given poor Bessy no time to announce the actual intention with which she came ; she had borne away her sullen mood by force of sweet smiles and sweeter words ; and saw her depart with gladdened spirits, whispering to herself the fresh hopes and fond emotions which filled her bosom. She walked back to her little garden and stooped to gather some fresh violets, and to prop a drooping jonquil heavy with its burthen of sweet blooms. She inhaled the vernal odours with rapture. " Yes," she thought, " nature is the refuge and home for women : they have no public career—no aim nor end beyond their domestic circle ; but they can extend that, and make all the creations of nature their own, to foster and do good to. We complain, when shut up in cities of the niggard rules of society, which gives us

only the drawing-room or ball-room in which to display our talents, and which, for ever turning the sympathy of those around us into envy on the part of women, or what is called love on that of men, besets our path with dangers or sorrows. But throw aside all vanity, no longer seek to surpass your own sex, nor to inspire the other with feelings which are pregnant with disquiet or misery, and which seldom end in mutual benevolence, turn your steps to the habitation which God has given as befitting his creatures, contemplate the lovely ornaments with which he has blessed the earth ;—here is no heart-burning nor calumny ; it is better to love, to be of use to one of these flowers, than to be the admired of the many—the mere puppet of one's own vanity.”

Lady Lodore entered the house ; she asked concerning her poor hostess, and learnt that she slept. For a short time she employed herself with her embroidery ; her thoughts were all awake ; and as her fingers created likenesses of

the flowers she loved, several times her eyes filled with tears as she thought of Ethel, and how happy she could be if her fate permitted her to cultivate her affection and enjoy her society.

“ It is very sad,” she thought ; “ only a few minutes ago my spirits were buoyant, gladdened as they were by Bessy’s visit ; but they flag again, when I think of my loneliness and the unreplying silence of this place. What is to become of me ? I shall remain here : yes ; I shall not banish myself to some inhospitable nook, where I should never hear her name. But am I not to see her again ? Am I to be nothing to her ? Is she satisfied with my absence—and are they all—all to whom I am bound by ties of consanguinity or affection, indifferent to the knowledge of whether I exist or not ? Nothing gives token to them of my life ; it is as if the grave had closed abruptly over me—and had it closed, thus I should have been mourned, in coldness and neglect ”

Again her eyes were suffused; but as she wiped away the blinding tears, she was recalled from her reflections by the bright rays of the sun which entered her little room. She threw open the door, stepped out into the garden—the sun was setting; the atmosphere was calm, and lighted up by golden beams; the few clouds were dyed in the same splendid hues, the birds sent forth a joyous song at intervals, and a band of rooks passed above the little wood, cawing loudly. The air was balmy, the indescribable freshness of spring was abroad, interpenetrating and cheerful. Cornelia's melancholy fled as she felt and gave way to its influence. "God blesses all things," she thought, "and he will also bless me. Much wrong have I done, but love pure and disinterested is in my heart, and I shall be repaid. My own sweet Ethel! I have sacrificed every thing except my life for your sake, and I would add my life to the gift, could it avail you. I ask but for you and your love. The world has many bless-

ings, and I have asked for them before, with tears and anguish, but I give up all now, except you, my child. You are all the world to me! Will you not come, even now, as I implore Heaven to give you to me?"

She raised her eyes in prayer, and it seemed as if her wishes were to be accomplished—surely once in a life God will grant the earnest entreaty of a loving heart. Cornelia believed that he would, that happiness was near at hand, and life not all a blank. She heard a rustling among the trees, a light step;—was it Margaret? She had scarcely asked herself this question, when the dear object of her every thought and hope was before her—in her arms;—Ethel had entered from the wood, had seen her mother, had sprung forward and clasped her to her heart.

“ My dear, dear child !”

“ Dearest mother !” repeated Ethel, as her eyes were filled with tears of delight, “ why did you go—why conceal yourself? You do not

know the anxiety we have suffered, and how very unhappy your absence has made us. But I have found you—of all that have gone to seek you, I have found you ; I deserve this reward, for I love you most of all.”

Lady Lodore returned her daughter’s caresses—and her tears flowed fast for very joy, and then she turned to Mrs. Fitzhenry, who followed Ethel, but who had been outspeeded by her in her eagerness. The old lady’s face was beaming with happiness. “ Ah, Bessy, you have betrayed me—traitress ! I did not expect this—I do not deserve such excessive happiness.”

“ You deserve all, and much more than we can any of us bestow,” cried Ethel, “ except that your dear generous heart will repay you beyond any reward we can give, and you will be blest in the happiness we owe to you alone. Edward is gone far away into Wales in quest of you.”

“ An Angelica run after by the Paladins,” said Lady Lodore, smiling through her tears.

“Paladins, worthy the name!” replied Ethel.
“Horatio is even now on the salt seas for your sake—he is returning discomfited and hopeless from his journey of discovery to the Pyrenees—his zeal almost deserved the reward which I have found, yet who but she, for whom you sacrificed so much, ought to be the first to thank you? And while we all try to show you an inexpressible gratitude, ought not I to be the first to see, first to kiss, first—always the first—to love you?”

CONCLUSION.

None, I trust,
Repines at these delights, they are free and harmless :
After distress at sea, the dangers o'er,
Safety and welcomes better taste ashore.

FORD.

THUS the tale of "Lodore" is ended. The person who bore that title by right of descent, has long slept in peace in the church of his native village. Neither his own passions, nor those of others, can renew the pulsations of his heart. "The silver cord is loosed, and the pitcher broken at the fountain." His life had

not been fruitless. The sedulous care and admirable education he had bestowed on Ethel, would, had he lived, have compensated to him for his many sufferings, and been a source of pure and unfading joy to the end. He was not destined in this world to reap the harvest of his virtues, though his errors had been punished severely. Still his memory is the presiding genius of his daughter's life, and the name of Lodore contains for her a spell that dignifies existence in her own eyes, and incites her to render all her thoughts and actions such as her beloved father would have approved. It was fated that the evil which he did should die with him—but the good out-lived him long, and was a blessing to those whom he loved far better than himself.

She who received the title on her marriage, henceforth continued her existence under another ; and the wife of Saville, who soon after became Viscountess Maristow, loses her right to be chronicled in these pages. So few years

indeed are passed since the period to which the last chapter brought us, that it may be safely announced that Cornelia Santerre possesses that happiness, through her generosity and devoted affection, which she had lost through pride and self-exaltation. She wonders at her past self—and laments the many opportunities she lost for benefiting others, and proving herself worthy of their attachment. Her pride is gone, or rather, her pride is now placed in redeeming her faults. She is humble, knowing how much she was deceived in herself—she is forgiving, for she feels that she needs forgiveness. She looks on the track of years she has passed over as wasted, and she wishes to retrieve their loss. She respects, admires, in some sense it may be said, that she adores her husband ; but even while consenting to be his, and thus securing her own happiness, she told him that her first duties were towards Ethel—and that he took a divided heart, over the better part of which reigned maternal love. Sa-

ville, the least egoistic of human beings, smiled to hear her name that a defect, which was in his eyes her crowning virtue.

Edward Villiers learnt to prize worldly prosperity at its true value, and each day blesses the train of circumstances that led him to wed Ethel, even though poverty and suffering had followed close behind. Ethel herself might be said to have been always happy. She was incapable of being impressed by any sorrow, that did not touch her for another's sake: and while she exerted herself to alleviate the pain endured by those she loved, she passed on unhurt. Heaven spared her life's most cruel evils. Death had done its worst when she lost her father. Now, surrounded by dear friends, and the object of her husband's constant tenderness, she pursues a tranquil course: which for any one to consider the most blissful allotted to mortals, they must have a heart like her own—faithful, affectionate, and generous.

Mrs. Elizabeth Fitzhenry, kind and gentle

aunt Bessy, always felt her heaven clouded while she indulged in her aversion to her sister-in-law. She is happy now that she is reconciled to Cornelia; strange to say, she loves her even more than she loves Ethel — she is more intimately connected in her mind with the memory of Lodore. She often visits her at Maristow Castle; in the neighbourhood of which Margaret is settled, being happily married. Colonel Villiers still lives in Paris. He is in a miserable state of poverty, difficulty, and ill-health. His wife has deserted him: he neglected and outraged her, and she in a fit of remorse left him, and returned to nurse her father during a lingering illness, which is likely to continue to the end of his life, though he shows no symptoms of immediate decay. He is eager to lavish all his wealth on his child, if he can be sure that no portion of it is shared by her husband. With infinite difficulty, and at the cost of many privations, she, with a true woman's feeling, con-

trives to send him remittances now and then, though she receives in return neither thanks nor kindness. He pursues a course of dissipation in its most degraded form—a wretched hanger-on at resorts, misnamed of pleasure—gambling while he has any money to lose—trying to ruin others as he has been ruined.

Thus we have done our duty, in bringing under view, in a brief summary, the little that there is to tell of the personages who formed the drama of this tale. One only remains to be mentioned: but it is not in a few tame lines that we can revert to the varied fate of Fanny Derham. She continued for some time among her beloved friends, innocent and calm as she was beautiful and wise; circumstances at last led her away from them, and she has entered upon life. One who feels so deeply for others, and yet is so stern a censor over herself—at once so sensitive and so rigidly conscientious—so single-minded and upright, and yet open as day to charity and affection, cannot hope to

pass from youth to age unharmed. Deceit, and selfishness, and the whole web of human passion must envelope her, and occasion her many sorrows; and the unworthiness of her fellow-creatures inflict infinite pain on her noble heart: still she cannot be contaminated—she will turn neither to the right nor left, but pursue her way unflinching; and, in her lofty idea of the dignity of her nature, in her love of truth and in her integrity, she will find support and reward in her various fortunes. What the events are, that have already diversified her existence, cannot now be recounted; and it would require the gift of prophecy to foretell the conclusion. In after times these may be told, and the life of Fanny Derham be presented as a useful lesson, at once to teach what goodness and genius can achieve in palliating the woes of life, and to encourage those, who would in any way imitate her, by an example of calumny refuted by patience, errors rectified by charity, and the passions of our nature purified and en-

nobled by an undeviating observance of those moral laws on which all human excellence is founded—a love of truth in ourselves, and a sincere sympathy with our fellow-creatures.

THE END.

LONDON

IBOTSON AND PALMER, PRINTERS, SAVOY STREET, STRAND.



UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS-URBANA



3 0112 000882628